THE INDUSTRY'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE LEARNERS' NEEDS TO PREPARE THE ENGLISH COURSE MATERIALS

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the industry's perspectives on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials for the Computer Engineering students. The identification done by investigating the assistant managers/managers from IT industry perspective which focused on the learners' needs in term of the English course materials. This research adopted a mixed methods of explanatory design to investigate the learners' needs.The sample of the study consisted of 10 assistant managers/managers from *Telkom Akses* Company. Then, the data were collected and generated from their perspectives answers on the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that *the main purpose of learners to learn English was for social purposes, and the content areas should focus on IT field workers. Then, the English language to be used should only dealt with speaking and vocabulary that emphasized on the presentation in a meeting in order to develop their professional communication.*

Keywords: perspectives, learners' need, and English course materials

Introduction

There are some challenges to prepare the English course materials, such to investigate, identify, select, create or modify and develop the materials that are appropriate to the learners. One of the most difficult problems concerning English course materials preparation isthat the materials should be solely or primarily subject specific. It is also hard 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 process or activity. In other words, in preparing the English course materials, they should emphasize the awareness the learner's need. Basturkmen (2010) *recommended to the*English course *developers to design the course materials properly in conjunction with professional needs or needs analysis.He* also stated that currently, it is important for all contributors to investigate the learners' needs as a prerequisite 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 also essential for facilitating the learners to improve the particular proficiency they need, and to be fully carrying out the performers in the perspectives they want.

The preparation of English course materials in the language course should relate to knowledge gained not only in the learners' study but also their future jobs or works.Dana (2015) stated that the English course materials must also adapt the requirements and qualifications from industries' needs. This is important to prepare the students who should be successful in an increasingly competitive global market and the conditions of the growing importance of communication skills. Therefore, the investigation to the industry as the external stakeholders could be as an attempt to propose the English course materials prepared for the learners. The investigation could be done by mapping and selecting the materials that are suitable for students at their level of professional development.

The students of School of Applied Science of Telkom University (SAS Tel U)

are expected to have English competencies in relation to communication skills in a globalstandard with the religious character, and good nationality. It is hoped that they can contribute to the development of the nation directly, and competein the globalmarket-place. The students of SAS Tel U learn English to gain and develop appropriate knowledge and skills through English. English courses are considered as a significant course in order to improve the learners' ability in learning language. Moreover, English course materials could fulfill a students' need in applying the English language proficiency in their life and in their learning activities in order to reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies in science and technology area.

As Mansouri (2010) stated that the students who are learning English for the purposes of studying science and technology are expected to have a high degree of motivation if the materials they are using in their English language courses have a scientific and technological content and exhibit the distinctive features of science and technology. Wijayanto (2017) also said that the students need to learn English and gain adequate knowledge to practice it 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.

This research aims to identify the industry's perspectives on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials for the students of Computer Engineering study program in SAS Tel U. The identification done by investigating the assistant managers/managers from Telkom Akses company perspective which focused on the learners' needs in term of the English course materials. The main reason for choosing Telkom Akses Company was because it is as one of the Information and Technology (IT) industries which has absorbed a lot of graduates or alumni from

Computer Engineering study program in SAS Tel U.

It is hoped this research 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 study may also become "a grand design" and provide English practitioners (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.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed methods research design to investigate the learners' needs viewed from the industry's perspectives to prepare the English course materials for the Computer Engineering students. 'Mixed methods research is a system for gathering, investigating, and "mixing" quantitative and qualitative data at some phase of the exploration procedure inside a solitary study with a specific end goal to comprehend an exploration issue all the more completely' (Ivankova and Creswell, 2009, p. 156). A mixed methods research design used extensively in this research was explanatory. According to Tavakoli (2012), the word explanatory in the design name suggests an explanation: qualitative findings are used to help describe, explain, refine, clarify, extend or argue quantitative results.

In this research, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed in sequence: first quantitative data was collected and analysed, and then qualitative data. The respondents' choices were based on the priority scales number (see appendix 1). If the respondents chose the higher number than other choices, it was meant that their choice was as the main priority. A typical example would include conducting follow-up qualitative interviews of representative or extreme cases to more deeply explore quantitative results. The

questionnaires and semi-structured interview used in this research were 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. Then, the data were collected and generated from their perspective answers of the learners' needs on the questionnaires and semi-structured interview.The visual model of this research study is explained in Figure 1.
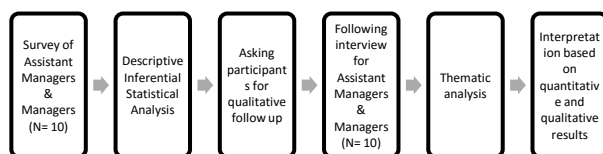

Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Explanatory Design.

The data were investigated and generated from the participants' perspectives answers on the questionnaires and semi-structured interview from 6 assistant managers and 4 managers of Telkom Akses Jakarta. In term of the English course materials, the respondents should choose the answer based on the main priority with the highest point as their first choice of priority.

Findings and Discussion
1. The Learners' Needs of English Course Materials

There were some parts would be investigated related to the learners' need of English course materials according to the industry's perspective, as follows:
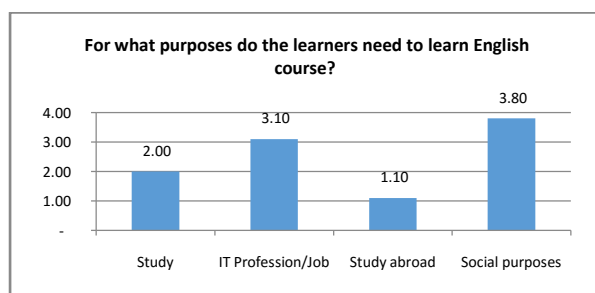
The purposes to learn English course

Figure 2. The learners' purposes to learn English course

According to assistant managers and managers' perspectives, it would be better if the main purpose for learners to learn English course was for social purpose. It meant that it would beneficial for them to use the English language for everyday or daily communication in oral and written forms with the general topic both of formal and informal situation. The respondents stated that, even most of the learners would be as the employees in the IT field, it didn't' mean that they should learn English course for IT profession or job with the specific purposes as the main priority. The learners should enhance their skill on the English daily communication first, then after they master on it, they would study English for specific purposes in the field of IT.
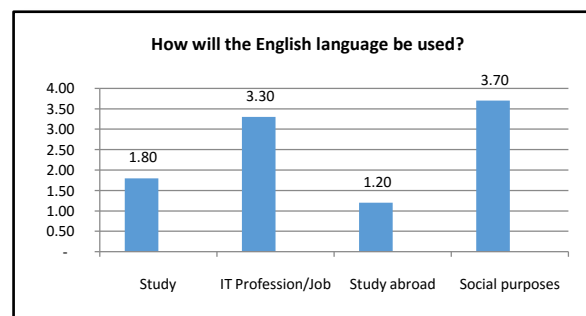
The English language would be used

Figure 3. The English language will be used

Related to the purpose of learning English, the respondents also gave their perspectives on the English language would be used in the course. It was better for learners to use English in social purposes with the daily topic of conversation both of formal and informal language. The similar reasons were stated clearly on the previous part on figure 2.

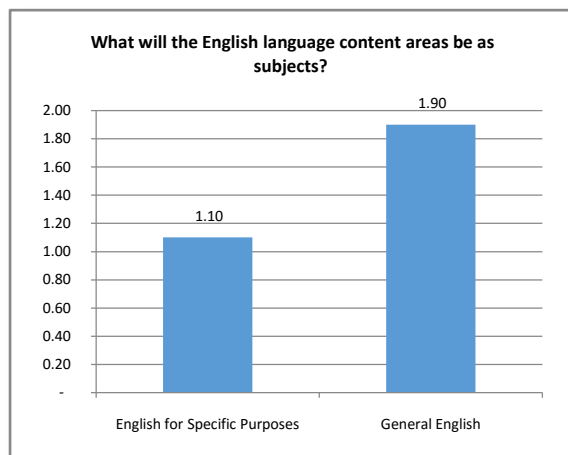*The English language content areas would be as a subjects*

Figure 4. The English language content areas would be as a subjects

According to the figure 4 above, the main priority of English language content areas that would be as subjects for the learners was General English. It was quite surprising that most of the assistant managers and managers had the same perspective on it. They stated that English for General Purposes would be the main priority for the learners to master.

The respondents had some reasons for it, such as the learners need to learn something from simple to more complex or from general into specific. Another reason was that studying English language took place on different levels in term of the ability or competency and the various settings or contexts. Even they work in the IT environment, it didn't mean that they had to be given the English for Specific Purposes related to their work in IT field.

The respondents also said that, mostly the use of English in the work environment was for general conversation. In other words, in the work setting, English for general communication is more needed to support the learners' work as the IT specialists.

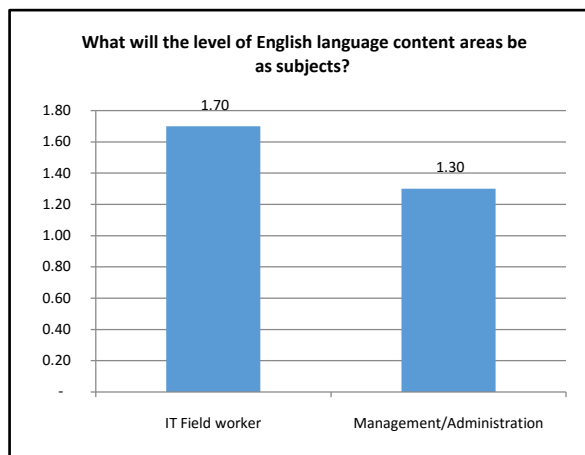*The level of English language content areas would be as a subjects*

Figure 5. The level of English language content areas would be as a subjects

In terms of the level of English language content areas that would be as a subjects, the respondents had a perspective that, even the learners learn and use general English as a subject for their course, the level of language was in the IT field worker. According to the respondents, the learners were prepared to be as an IT specialist after they graduate, not in management or administration position.

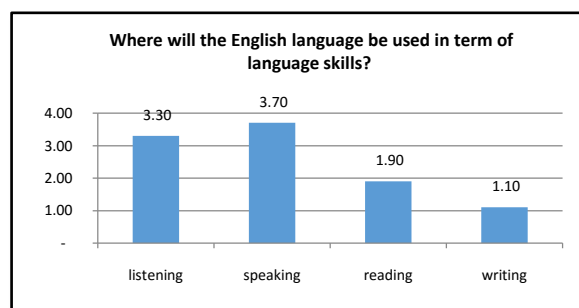*The English language would be used in term of language skills*

Figure 6. The English language would be used in term of language skills

As illustrated on figure 6 above, most of the assistant managers and managers agreed that speaking was the main priority in the English language skills. They had the perspectives that by developing the learners' skills in speaking, it would improve their

fluency in spoken interactions with colleagues or co-workers. It was also in line with the purpose of learning English in the previous part of discussion. The second main choice was listening skill. According to them, in the work setting, the employees often listen to the meeting presentation and seminar with the presenter who came from different countries or foreigners. Therefore, the employees should not only improve their speaking skill but also their listening in order to get the information.

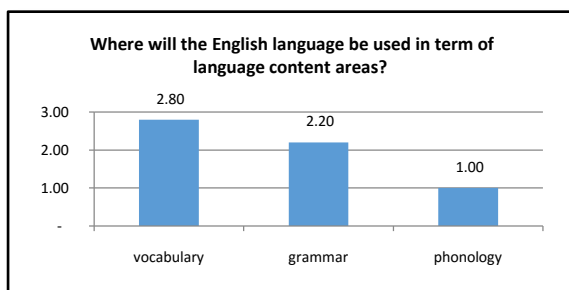*The English language would be used in term of language content areas*

Figure 7. The English language would be used in term of language content areas

Besides giving the main priority into speaking ability in the English language skill, the respondents also chose vocabulary as the main content area of English. They had the opinion that, by enriching the learners' vocabulary, it also would enhance their speaking skill when they communicate with others, especially with the colleagues from different countries.
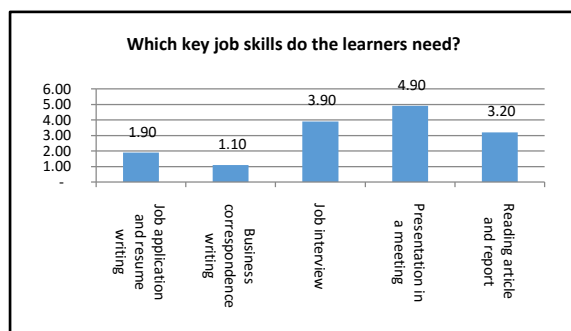
The key job skills which were needed

Figure 8. The key job skills which were needed

Then, related to the key job skills which were needed in the English course materials, most of the assistant managers and managers chose the presentation in a meeting as the most essential material that should be delivered in the English course. As stated on the previous part of the English language would be used in term of language skills, it was because that they often conduct the meeting presentation and seminar with the colleagues from different countries.

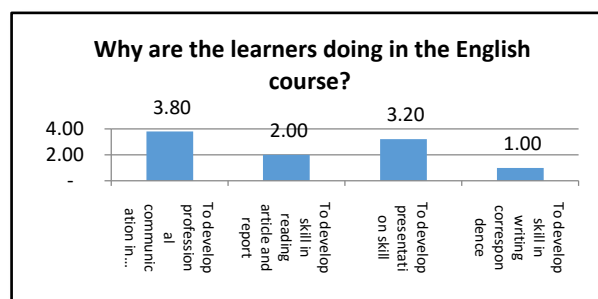*The reasons of learners doing in the English course*

Figure 9. 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. This main reason was to develop their skill in presentation in the office work. It was also in line with the respondents' previous answer as illustrated on figure 6, that the speaking was the main priority of language skill that should be used in the English course to enhance the learner's ability in English communication. The next reason for learners doing in the English course was to develop their presentation skill. It was also similar with the main key job skills which were needed in the English course materials as stated on figure 8.

Conclusion
This research aimed at identifying the industry's perspectives as the external stakeholders on the learners' needs in order to prepare the English course materials for

the students of Computer Engineering study program in SAS Tel U. The results showed that according to the assistant managers and managers from the IT industry, the main purpose of learners to learn English was for social purposes. It should be better also for learners to use English for everyday or daily communication in oral and written forms with the general topic both of formal and informal situation. It was surprisingly that the respondents chose the general English as the main priority of English language content areas as subjects for the learners which focused on IT field workers. Then, according to the respondents' perspectives, the English language to be used should only dealt with speaking and vocabulary. Those language skill and contents area should emphasized on the presentation in a meeting in order to develop their professional communication.

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