Abstract: Having an effective, well-planned course design is a must in an ESP course. Aiming to that, a thorough need analysis (NA) is conducted at Gemanusa Sentra Teknologi (GST), an IT company that requires its employees to have a good command of English to do the job well. Questionnaires, semi-structure interviews and observations of participants doing their jobs were conducted to find out the present situation, target situation, and learning situation of the upcoming course as suggested by Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998:123-124) and Westerfield (2010). The research reveals a gap between the NA results regarding the wide range of target events, materials, and students’ low speaking competence and the course objective. A negotiation with stakeholders was conducted in order to bridge the gap (Dudley-Evans and St.John, 1989:14). The NA and negotiation made it possible to design a well-planned ESP course.

Keywords: Need analysis, present situation, target situation, learning situation.

Introduction

A lot of companies in Indonesia uses English as a medium of communication either orally or written or both as “English has become the international language of business” (Dudley-Evans and St.John 1998:53). Some companies use English extensively that is employees are required to use English in almost all aspects of their day to day office works such as in doing their administrative works and non-administrative works which include the companies’ core jobs. Some other companies, on the other hand, use English only to a certain extent that is employees are required to use English only in some parts of their administrative works, some parts of their non-administrative works, or in doing some parts of their core jobs. Employees of GST are included in the latter.

Having no training department the company tried to find help to train its employees a good command of English thus equipping them with the skill needed to do their jobs well. Obviously, the jobs which mainly deals with IT language—which are mostly English—, requires its employees to use English in their core jobs. In addition to that, the company often encounters language barriers when communicating with clients and suppliers who are not only Indonesian but also native and nonnative speakers of English. Agreeing to the request and wanting to make a well-designed and effective ESP course, a thorough Needs Analysis (NA) was conducted beforehand as “needs analysis is a process which is undertaken by trainers, teachers and course designers to ascertain the pre-requisites for developing a course and its implementation” (Khan, 2011:634). In addition to that, many researchers stated that NA is a must process to be conducted before having an ESP course as it is the central process to having a well-structured, efficient ESP course. Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998), Jiajing (2007), Cowling (2009), Westerfield (2010), Khan et.al (2011), Kim (2013), and Knight (2014) are among the researchers who see the prominent importance of NA. Westerfield (2010) even stated that “a thorough organizational and instructional needs assessment lies the heart of a well-designed, effective ESP course”. As we can see, NA is undoubtedly has to be done if course designer aims towards establishing a well-structured ESP course.

Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998:122), point out that NA is an extremely important stage which brings a course to a point of focus. The key word, at this point, is focus which entails the specificity of the ESP course. Thus, this NA tries to focus the specificity of this particular course by uncovering as much as possible the present situation analysis (PSA), the target situation analysis (TSA) and learning situation analysis (LSA) of the upcoming ESP course– as suggested by Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998:123-124) and Westerfield (2010). These PSA, TSA and LSA form the basis for constructing the questionnaires.

Methods

Looking at Cowling (2007:428) implementation of “multiple sources and methods” in NA stage in his research which enable him to come up with more credible data thus able to produce an appropriate syllabus and materials for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) in Japan; this particular study also implement a multiple-data-gathering processes which also aims at gaining more credible data of what particular English skills needed and desired by the target participants as well as the stakeholders (GST), and what sort of materials and communication interactions and activities have had, desired and needed by the target participants to support his working performance. The processes are as follows:
Step 1: Semi-structured interview with the Personnel Manager

The Personnel manager, the person in charge of the training also one of the stakeholders of the upcoming course, was interviewed to determine the nature of the course and the reasons which underlie GST’s request. In addition to that, it aims at finding out the needs of the target participants from the point of view of the stakeholder. The questions were taken from Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:145).

Step 2: Questionnaires combined with an interview for the target participants

In order to reveal a complete data of the target participants’ TSA, PSA and LSA, questionnaires were given to the target participants. The filling-in-questionnaire session was guided in order to avoid misunderstanding the questions. Upon finishing the filling-in-questionnaires session, informal interviews with the target participants were conducted. The interviews were conducted in two big groups. The questions were aimed at asking in a more detail way about what the target participants have written down in the questionnaires. Thus, the questions asked in the informal interview are derived from the questionnaires and the target participants’ answers. In other words, the interview was conducted for the purpose of gaining as much data as possible regarding the target participants’ answers in the questionnaires. In addition to that, it was done because “…target participants might have little or vise versa expertise in the target course” (Long, 2005:20). The informal interview with the target participants which was conducted in English also served as an arena of an informal oral test in which their speaking competence were assessed. In short, this second stage is a-two-process-stage which are (1) guided-questionnaires-filling and; (2) informal oral test by interviewing the target participants.

Step 3: Observation of target participants doing their jobs in their respective workplace

Upon asking permission to the personnel manager, seven hours of observation of target participants’ doing their job in their very own working environment was conducted. It started at 8:00 AM and finished at 1:00 PM. This observation was conducted in order to see what sort of communication activity that especially needs English as a medium of communication. It was also aimed at looking at the frequency of the communication activity which requires English as a medium of communication, and whether or not it’s a written or oral communication. Up to this point, however, data would have probably been gained more if only the observation were held longer.

Step 4: Negotiation with the stakeholder

This step was actually taken after getting all the results of the above NA processes. After putting all the NA results together, the course designer need to negotiate some NA findings, especially the ones related to the wide range of target events and materials to be covered. Another triggering negotiation is the fact that more than half of the target participants have low speaking competence (NA interview result: only three are good). The negotiation is also based on company’s urgent needs. Dudley-Evans and St John (1989:14) point out that negotiation shall take place in situation where there is a gap of NA results (e.g., course materials) and the course objectives.

Findings

The NA reveals the parameters of the course are as follows: (1) an extensive course to be held once a week; (2) need to be assessed in order to know target participants progress; (3) broad in focus since it covers a range of target events, and (4) the materials are a combination of common core and learners’ specific work; (5) attendance policy is mandatory to a certain extent- absence is permitted upon personnel manager’s approval (such as for company’s urgent matters or other inevitable matters).

The NA also uncovers some important points that the course designer should take into account in designing the course regarding the stakeholders’ wants and needs. The first point is that the target participants need to have a good reading skill; the strong reason for this would be the nature of the IT company whose language is mostly English (IT manuals, tutorials, software programs and systems). The second point is that having clients and suppliers ranging from Indonesian to foreigners who are nonnative speakers of English (Singapore, Malaysia, China, Taiwan) demands its employees to have a sufficient command of communicating skill in English as well. The third point is that there are 11 out of 12 target participants for the upcoming course who are mostly at the very early stage of their career, thus they need to be trained for their skills in English for their future use in the company.

The NA also reveals the target participants’ PSA regarding the skills and materials they need to master. The skills which will be the focus are: (1) Reading comprehension skill, focusing on comprehending IT articles and manuals; (2) Listening Comprehension, focusing on phone conversations, understanding instructions and complaints from customers, about the company’s products; (3) Speaking skill focusing on conversing about office work, handling phone calls, giving simple presentation, and giving instructions to provide solutions to
clients on how to use the software; (4) Writing skill focusing on email writing, and prices listing; (5) the material they need to master are IT hardware and software, the company’s products i.e., the system, the prices, the tutorials, the instructions, and the benefits. The interview result presents data that there are 3 out of 12 target participants whose speaking competence are good, one out of 12 whose speaking competence are fair and the rest of the target participants, which constitute more than half of the participants, have a weak speaking competence.

With regards to the target participants’ TSA, the NA found out that the target participants’ role-range are: three IT supports, four programmers, one administration staff, three marketing staff and one Marketing manager. As such their responsibility-range are: having to update software (the company’s products), handling phone calls, writing emails, promoting and selling company’s products orally and online. Based on this NA, the urgently needed skills to be mastered are: to have good communication skills, writing formal letters, emails, understanding software tutorials and manuals.

The NA also gains some findings about the target participants’ LSA. Most of them, which constitute 83.33% of the total participants, like to learn in groups and more than half of them, which constitutes 66.66% of them, like to learn individually. The NA could also uncover some difficulties that the participants able to identify; they are as follows: difficulty in memorizing expressions in English, less efforts on their parts, not having enough time to practice writing and having conversations in English, learning English grammar only and not English conversation, and last but not least teacher’s poor teaching methods which contribute to their difficulties in learning English.

Another finding from this NA is the fact that there are 33.33% has ever visited / stayed in English speaking countries and communicate in English with foreigners from: Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, China and Taiwan. In addition to that, it is found that more than half of participants have ever taken an English course before. These facts, however, do not reflected in their speaking ability, since more than half of the target participants have a weak speaking competence. All of the above findings serve the basis for designing the course syllabus, materials and course evaluation which will be elaborated in the following sections.

The negotiation results are: (1) regarding the range of target events and the wide range of materials to be covered, the company agree to have two consecutive course periods, 30 hours each period to be held once a week with two weeks of holiday in between the period; (2) regarding the low experience target participants (eleven out of twelve target participants are at their early stage of their career and excluding one experience workers -the marketing manager), and their low speaking competence, they need to be trained for general business English first; in order to build their speaking competence, confidence and motivation. Thus the first period covers the general business English conversation with little specific content; (3) considering company’s and target participants’ urgent need, answering phones calls and writing email should be covered in the first period of the course as it often triggers problem in the company. As for the email writing, it will be divided into two parts: writing simple email and writing more advance email which covers more formal matters. Writing simple email will be held in the first course period and the more advanced one will be held in the second course period. (4) aside from the more advanced email writing, the second period of the course, will also focus on the specific materials (still combined with common core materials); (5) should there be any changes on the agreement, it will be made based on the results of the first course period evaluation. These negotiations form the framework of the course.

The ESP Course Framework

Based on the course parameters and negotiation of NA results, the following are the details of the target events which will be covered in two consecutive course period.

Table 1: Target events of GST

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<th>No</th>
<th>Target Events</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Course Period 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greetings and Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talking about daily office work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explaining product benefits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Making, answering phone calls and taking messages</td>
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<td>Writing simple email</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Course Period 2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding software manuals, tutorials, IT articles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Giving simple presentation for sales purposes i.e promoting software</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handling complaints about company’s products i.e software functions, program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving instructions on how to use software to provide solutions to customers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing formal business letters and emailing</td>
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As we can see each course period covers five central target events which are constructed based on the NA. These target events each will be broken down into appropriate target language points/discourse (general business English expressions-for the first course period and more specific for the second period- and the appropriate grammar point) and appropriate main activities. The main activities incorporate listening tasks prior to speaking activity and reading tasks prior to writing activity.

**Conclusion and Suggestions**

Designing an effective and well-designed English course for employees of an IT company –GST- starts by conducting a thorough-four-step NA i.e., (1) semi-structured interview with the Personnel Manager; (2) questionnaires combined with an interview for the target participants; (3) observation of target participants doing their jobs in their respective workplace, to reach the stakeholder’s target as well as participants’ taking the benefits of the course for their working performance in the workplace; and (4) Negotiation with the stakeholder. These multiple NA processes present some important findings covering the course parameters, the reasons behind the request of the course by the stakeholder, the stakeholders’ and target participants’ PSA, LSA and TSA thus provide more credible data which enable course designer to come up with more visible ESP course framework.

**References**


