

TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES THROUGH TASK-BASED APPROACH IN A HOSPITALITY COLLEGE

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Abstract

This research is intended to investigate the effectiveness of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) through the task-based approach in a hospitality college. This research is of a descriptive and qualitative study. It uses six stages: pre-task, task, planning, report, analysis, and practice (British Council, 2018) along with three techniques for collecting data: observation, questionnaire and in-depth interviewing. There were 34 students of Hotel Department at Sahid Tourism Institute of Surakarta and an English lecturer prepared as research subjects. The research findings show that: (1) students were very active in teaching and learning ESP through task-based approach; (2) students used their ESP in authentic situations that felt like the “real world”; and (3) at the end of the teaching and learning process, their knowledge of ESP improved. The findings indicate strongly that not only did the teaching English for Specific Purposes through task-based approach develop the students’ English speaking skills effectively but also increased their hospitality knowledge.

Keywords: English for specific purposes, task-based approach, hospitality college

Introduction

The main goal of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in a hospitality college is to prepare students to be able to communicate well before joining internships in hospitality industries. Unfortunately, as reported by Purnomo (2016), during the students’ duties of internship in hotel industries, there were still many complaints from the supervisors and the guests related to the students’ poor ability in using English for oral communication.

Related to the above condition, ESP lecturers in a hospitality college are required to be creative, innovative and may adopt distinctive teaching methods to reach the main goal. So, the teaching quality of the lecturers is very crucial to conduct. One of the teaching methods that is believed to be able to improve students’ ESP is teaching with a task-based approach.

Many interesting studies have been done on task-based approach in English language teaching up to now. Willis (2009) described that task-based language teaching provides learners with natural exposure

(input), chances to use language (without fear or getting things wrong) to express what they want to mean (output), to focus on improving their own language as they proceed from Task to Report stage, and to analyze and practice forms. In addition, Marsakawati (2016) found that task-based learning and teaching technique is a rewarding teaching strategy which can be applied, particularly in ESP contexts. It surely provides a direct shoot to fulfilling students’ needs and the learning objective can be achieved effectively. Then, Whyte (2018) recommended that the next step in promoting effective ESP learning and teaching in higher education contexts lies on the definition of particular domains and the systematic application of principles of task-based learning and teaching to each. In this way, teaching can respect the specificity of ESP contexts in the design of appropriate language courses based on authentic tasks which motivate learners and promote effective language learning.

Based on the above problems, the research was intended to investigate the

effectiveness of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) through the task-based approach in a hospitality college.

Methodology

This study is of a descriptive and qualitative nature. It uses six stages: pre-task, task, planning, report, analysis, and practice (British Council, 2018) along with three techniques for collecting data: observation, questionnaire and in-depth interviewing. There were 34 of second- year students studying at Hotel Department of Sahid Tourism Institute of Surakarta and an English lecturer prepared as research subjects.

Through task-based approach students learned English for Specific Purposes with the following topics: (1) handling reservations, (2) meeting tourists at the airport/railway station, (3) providing information upon arrival on the way to the hotel, (4) handling checking in, (5) handling telephone inquiries, (6) giving directions, (7) giving information about art performances and entertainment, (8) beginning a tour and describing the itinerary, (9) describing points of interest on the tour route, (10) serving meals at restaurants, (11) describing process used in making art objects, (12) bargaining for souvenir prices, (13) describing tourist sites and (14) handling checking out (Purnomo, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

Adapted from British Council (2018), the model of teaching ESP through task-based approach was formulated into six stages. Furthermore, this is a lesson with the topic of handling check-in in that uses a speaking exercise.

1. Pre-task

The lecturer introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task. The pre-task stage can also often include playing a recording of people doing the task. This

gives the students a clear model of what will be expected of them. The students can take notes and spend time preparing for the task.

The time for pre-task is 20 minutes. To highlight words and phrases, students are given a task to repeat a list of vocabularies expressed by their lectures. The next step is they should understand the meaning of the vocabularies in L2 (Indonesian Language).

2. Task

The students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that they have as the lecturer monitors and offers encouragement.

The time for the task is 20 minutes. Students do the task in twos and have a dialogue simulation on handling check-in. Match them with another pair to discuss their ideas and any similarities and differences.

3. Planning

Students prepare a short oral or written report to tell the class what happened during their task. They then practice what they are going to say in their groups. Meanwhile, the lecturer is available for the students to ask for advice to clear up any language questions they may have.

The time for planning is 15 minutes. Each pair rehearses presenting handling check-in dialogue. Teacher walks around, helps them if they need it and notes down any language points to be highlighted later.

4. Report

Students then report back to the class orally or read the written report. The lecturer chooses the order of when students will present their reports and may give the students some quick feedback on the content. At this stage, the lecturer may also play a recording of others doing the same task for the students to compare.

The time for the report is 15 minutes. Class listen to the plans, their task is to choose one of them. They can ask questions after the presentation. The lecturer gives feedback on the content and quickly reviews

what was suggested. Students vote and choose one of the handling check-ins.

5. Analysis

The lecturer then highlights relevant parts from the dialogue of the recording for the students to analyze. They may ask students to notice interesting features within this dialogue. The lecturer can also highlight the language that the students used during the report phase for analysis. The time for analysis is 20 minutes.

6. Practice

Finally, the lecturer selects language areas to practice based on the needs of the students and what emerged from the task and report phases. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

The time for analysis is 50 minutes with the following steps: (1) write on the board five good phrases used by the students during the task and five incorrect phrases/sentences from the task without the word that caused the problem. Students discuss the meaning and how to complete the sentences; (2) ask the students to underline the useful words and phrases; (3) highlight any language you wish to draw attention to e.g. language for offering assistance, agreement etc and (4) students write down any other language they wish to remember.

Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion, conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The task-based approach is a good model for teaching English for Specific Purposes at tourism college.
2. Students were very active in teaching and learning process and they learned in authentic situations that felt like the “real world”.
3. At the end of the teaching and learning process, students’ knowledge of ESP improved.

4. Not only did the teaching English for Specific Purposes through task-based approach develop students’ English speaking skill effectively, but also increased their hospitality knowledge.

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