THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN INDONESIA &
ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT - UNIVERSITY OF PGRI ADI BUANA SURABAYA
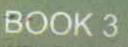
International Conference 2016
TEFLIN

8 - 10
September 2016
University of PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya
Indonesia

PROCEEDINGS

"Creativity and Innovation in
Language Materials Development and
Language Teaching Methodology
in Asia and Beyond"

BOOK 3

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DEVELOPING BUSINESS CROSS CULTURE MATERIALS IN NEED OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE

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ABSTRACT

Some English departments generally provide Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) as a content subject. They usually emphasize more on knowledge. In need of English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Business Cross Culture (BCC) is designed to develop learners' communicative skills in English for business or social purposes for learners of Business English department of Politeknik Ubaya. In this paper, the writer aims at sharing his teaching experience to develop BCC materials in need of ESP instead of content-based instruction. It is necessary to identify the specific needs of the learners that study BCC. Then, their learning objectives are clearly set up and their relevant learning tasks are also prepared. As a matter of fact, ESP is a promising approach for preparing learners to succeed in their future global workplace. The learners also want to learn passionately when they learn what they need. That's why the writer develops BCC materials based on their needs especially to cope with Asean Economic Community. Feedbacks of the working experience are also needed to enhance the success of communication in the diverse workplace. To achieve the desired outcomes, the learners should also have authentic, appropriate, and joyful learning materials so that they could perform not only their English communication skills but also their knowledge, skills, and attitude to deal with people from different culture with respect.

Keywords: developing BCC materials, ESP, needs analysis.

INTRODUCTION

English departments generally provide Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) as a content subject, they carry out content-based instructions. The instructional program might focus on the content the learners learn in regular classrooms. Business English department of Politeknik Ubaya Surabaya provides Business Cross Culture (BCC) in need of English for Specific Purpose (ESP). BCC is similar to CCU in business context. And BCC as ESP means the instructional program arranged by the specific needs of a particular group of learners (Richard et al, 1992:125). ESP in BCC is expected to be a promising approach for preparing learners to succeed in their future global workplace. In ESP, the teacher also has the role of a researcher of the course contents. In this study, the writer (as BCC teacher) has to conduct a survey on analyzing the needs of the learners. For this survey, the respondents are the two-batch students of Business English study program of Politeknik Ubaya Surabaya that took the BCC subject and some others of that did their apprenticeship at some workplaces. Based on the data of needs analysis, the writer also has to choose the learning materials by considering their qualities, such as authenticity and appropriateness. And to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process, the teacher also has to make the learning activities joyfully so that the learners keep their passion/motivation/needs to learn. Moreover, they also enjoy learning the BCC materials when they engage in their joyful learning activities. In this paper, the writer also explains the hard-skills and soft-skills of BCC to cope with current competitive challenges of preparing human resources in the Asean Economic Community (AEC) so that the learners are ready to compete their future career in workplaces of Asean. For that reason, the writer would like to develop BCC materials by analyzing the needs of the learners that took the BCC course so that the BCC learning materials are really useful to equip with their career in the intercultural workplaces.

Needs Analysis

It is important to analyze the learners' needs in order to know what they really need, such as knowledge, skills and attitude that they have to master. Evans and John also states (2000:123)

that needs analysis aims at knowing what the learners didn't know in order not to waste their learning time. It also makes the BCC course as ESP be more professional. The teacher also learns to know how well the learners know the BCC learning materials and which culture they need sharpening. It is necessary to find out what skills the learners need in order to perform a particular role, such as business communicator/negotiator across cultures. To make their learning materials be effective and efficient, the teacher as a researcher of the needs analysis has to develop the learning materials based on the learners' needs by using questionnaires, self-ratings, interviews, meetings, observations of learners' behavior in a target situation/in class, collecting learners' portfolio tasks (two or more sources) as a triangular approach (Richards, 2001:59). Needs analysis is also the process of establishing the what and how of a course design (Evans and John, 2000:21) Brown (1995:35) also states that needs analysis refers to the activities involved in gathering information that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students. As a matter of fact, the learners only learn what they really need or want to learn (Tomlinson & Masubara, 2004:2).

Needs to Cope With AEC

It is expected that the BCC learning materials could also cope with the needs of the intercultural workplaces, such as the Asean Economic Community (AEC) that consists of 10 countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, The Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Brunei. English is still needed to be the medium of communication in the workplace like Asean. Therefore, the BCC course should provide the hard-skills and soft-skills which are relevant to the needs of the intercultural workplaces like South East Asian Countries. The hard-skills the learners need in the BCC course could be the cultural components, such as language, religions, basic cultural types of the Asean people, and other communication aspects. And the soft-skills they need in the BCC course could help raise the cross cultural awareness of tolerance, respect, and understanding. In short, the BCC learning materials might help the learners gain intercultural competence and positive attitude towards the workplace diversity. The learners that take the BCC course are prepared and expected to be ready to adjust with the diverse workplaces such as South East Asian countries. Developing the learning materials of BCC is also as an instrument of preparing competent human resources that could compete with the hard-skills and soft-skills of others in the scope of AEC. The people of AEC that are living in one global village should understand and communicate in the workplaces without erasing their own identity of their mother tongue cultures while learning others. That's why, the learners in AEC have to cope with the local and global needs of their future workplaces. They have to compete with other local professionals. But when they have to compete with other global professionals, they have to meet the global standards. To compete globally, they must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to behave in a manner of a specific culture. Cultural diversity will manifest within global market place, making intercultural competence an extremely important skills (Heidari & Dabaghi, 1991).

ESP vs CBI

To develop BCC learning materials using ESP approach differs to that of content based instructions (CBI). Some characteristics of BCC learning materials in CBI would be as follows:
- the teacher decides the learning materials based on the objectives of the instruction.
- the evaluation of the instruction is generally measuring the learners' knowledge.

On the other hand, some characteristics of BCC learning materials by using ESP approach would be as follows:
- the teacher who as a researcher decides the learning materials based on the needs analysis of the learners to meet specific needs of the learners and specific discipline, such as BCC.
- the evaluation of the instruction is measuring the abilities required for successful communication in occupational settings (Gatehouse, 2001). In the BCC course, the teacher would evaluate not only the hard-skills (the learners' intercultural competence like their knowledge and performing skills) but also the soft-skills (the positive attitude and manners of the learners).

- the language teacher could collaborate with the expert of the subject matter and, the teacher as the researcher has to conduct need analysis before designing the BCC course.

The Characteristics of ESP

The BCC teacher tries to develop BCC learning materials based on some necessary aspects and features by using ESP approach. Some necessary aspects of the BCC learning materials are knowledge, skills, and attitude. First, the learners should learn enough appropriate knowledge on other cultures based on the aim of the course and the learners' needs. Second, the learners should perform/show their intercultural abilities/competence/skills to support their work. Third, the learners have the willingness to learn about the others' cultures. They show their positive attitude to understand other cultures and raise the awareness of tolerance, respect, and good understanding to the culture diversity. According to Byram et al (2002:11) intercultural competence has different components including knowledge, skills, and attitudes, complemented by the values one holds because one belongs to a number of social groups. Some other necessary features of learning materials developed by using ESP approach are authentic, appropriate, and joyful. First, authentic learning materials have the qualities of natural or real speech or writing, such as speech taken from radio/TV program or writing tests taken from magazines or newspaper (Richards et al, 1992:27). Authentic learning materials should be from genuine/original sources that reflect closely in meaningful real life communication. Second, appropriate learning materials should help learners connect the learning experience in the classroom to their own lives outside it (Tomlinson & Masubara, 2004:2). Appropriate learning materials should be suitable for the particular situation/context (Richards, 1992:20). The learning materials should be appropriate to the learners' ages, language level, prior learning experience, and learning styles (Tomlinson & Masubara, 2004:12). Third, the learning materials should be learned joyfully because the learners (students and teachers) really want to learn and are intrinsically motivated because they find learning fulfilling and enjoyable. So, learning is joyful (Ng, 2005:3). Learners only succeed if learning is a positive, relaxed, and enjoyable experience (Tomlinson & Masubara, 2004:2).

The Survey Results

In analyzing the learners' needs, the writer collected some data by conducting a survey for developing BCC learning materials. The techniques used for collecting data were questionnaires, interviews, and reflections. And the respondents of the questionnaires were all students of Business study program of Politeknik Ubaya in the academic year of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 (N=25) who had already taken BCC course. The survey was conducted in March 2016. The results of the survey from the respondents of Business English study program of Politeknik Ubaya Surabaya concerning on the needs of BCC learning materials are as follows:
When asked about the most useful BCC learning materials, the respondents replied that they were verbal communication(47% of the respondents), such as kinds of greetings, how to say 'hello', 'thank you', 'good-bye', etc in different languages, how to exchange business cards (44%), non-verbal communication(42%), such as gestures and body language from different cultures and table-manners(40%) from different cultures.
When asked about priorities of BCC learning materials the learners need for their future career, the respondents replied that BCC learning materials they needed could be prioritized/ranked as follows:
- the study of cultural components(language, religion, etc) - (89% of the respondents)
- verbal communication (hello, thank you, good-bye, etc) in different language (86%)
- table-manners (American, Continental, Chinese, Japanese, etc) - (84%)
- how to cope with cultural shocks (82%)
- non-verbal communication (gestures, body language, proxemics, etc) from different cultures (79%)
- how to exchange business cards (74%)
- understanding basic cultural types of people from different cultures (poly-chronic/mono-chronic, high-context culture/low-context culture, collectivism/individualism, etc) (73%)
- understanding stereotypes (64%)

When asked about BCC learning materials they thought that the learning materials were not so useful/urgent, they replied that the following BCC learning materials were not so useful/urgent as follows:

- songs/dances etc from different nations (66% of the respondents)
- meals/cuisines/beverages from different nations (33%)

When asked about how much knowledge on BCC learning materials they gained before and after the BCC course, the respondents replied that they gained the total average score 34% (score scales 0%-100%) before the BCC course, and the total average score 79% after it.

When asked about the positive impacts after taking the BCC course, the respondents replied that they could raise the awareness of respect and tolerance (80% of the respondents), have the ability to communicate and compare (73%), know the table-manners of people from different cultures (67%), make the business negotiation/communication run smoothly (60%), have more friends from different cultures (53%), and develop their self-awareness of their own culture (47%).

When asked about their attitude on different cultures before and after taking BCC learning materials, the respondents replied as follows: (scales 0% - 100%)

Cultural items	Before taking BCC	After taking BCC
Raising the self-awareness of their own culture	40%	78%
Raising the awareness of respect	51%	83%
Raising the awareness of tolerance	53%	86%
Raising the awareness of appreciation	53%	82%
Raising the awareness of accepting different cultures as they are	55%	85%

When asked about the most beneficial BCC learning materials, the respondents replied that they were as follows:

- learning other simple daily languages and cultures from different countries (53% of the respondents)
- learning how to use non-verbal communication appropriately from different cultures (20%)
- learning how to eat correctly by using table-manners from different countries (16%)
- learning how to exchange business cards from different cultures (13%)

When asked about their suggestions to improve the BCC course, the respondents replied that their suggestions were as follows:

- having more practice/role-plays on verbal and non-verbal communication
- inviting more experts/foreign guest speakers in class
- seeing more videos/movies to learn different cultures
- having more table-manners' practice
- having study-tours on some countries to learn different cultures

Some Findings

Based on the results of the survey above, the writer could summarize in the following findings: the knowledge of BCC learning materials the learners needed would be as follows:

- simple basic verbal communication from different languages, such as kinds of greetings, how to say hello/thank you/good-bye.
- non-verbal communication form different countries, such as gestures, body-language, and proxemics.
- some cultural components, such as languages, religious, etc.
- some table-manners from different countries, such as American table-manners, Continental table-manners, Chinese table-manners, and Japanese table-manners.

- understanding how to cope with cultural shocks, understanding stereotypes, and basic cultural types, such as collectivism/individualism, poly-chronic/mono-chronic, and high-context culture/low-context culture.

And some other findings were that the BCC materials, such as songs and dances, cuisines and beverages from different countries were just nice to know (meaning that they were not so urgent).

The skills of BCC learning materials they needed would also be as follows:
- the practice/the use of some basic simple verbal communication from some different languages, such as how to say hello/thank you/good-bye in different languages.
- the practice/the use of non-verbal communication appropriately form different countries
- the practice/the use of some table-manners from different countries
- the practice of exchanging business-cards appropriately from different cultures

The attitude of BCC learning materials the learners could gain would also be as follows:
- raising the self-awareness of their own culture
- raising the awareness of respect, tolerance, and appreciation on people from different countries/cultures
- raising the awareness of accepting different culture as they are

Based on the learners' reflection on taking BCC course, the respondents that gained all aspects of BCC learning materials (knowledge, skills, attitude) significantly could be shown in the following formula (with score-scales 0%-100%):

$$\text{Total average gain} = 79\% - 34\% = 45\%$$

To enhance the BCC learning materials, the respondents suggested their passionate ways of learning BCC, such as role-playing/practicing, seeing videos/films, having study-tours, having table-manners, and inviting foreign guest-speakers.

Benefits of learning BCC by using ESP approach.
- using the learning materials to the learners' needs
- enhancing cross cultural communicative competence in Business English Class
- developing the positive attitude towards cross-cultural tolerance
- helping the learners raise the intercultural awareness and competence
- preparing the learners to cope with their living and working in global workplaces for successful communication

CONCLUSION

Developing the BCC learning materials by using ESP approach promotes the learners' effective learning. The learners only learn what they really need for their future career so they don't waste their time to learn the learning materials they don't need. By knowing their needs on BCC learning materials, the learners could learn the authentic and appropriate learning materials joyfully. They could gain their intercultural knowledge and skills significantly and raise their intercultural awareness of tolerance, respect, and understanding. They are preparing the learners to cope with their living and working in global workplaces, such as in AEC for successful communication. Therefore, the needs analysis of the learners could foster the learning effectiveness to gain the intercultural competence and awareness.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

In this study, the writer could learn not only to develop BCC learning materials by using the ESP approach but also how to provide the learning effectiveness for the learners' future career in cross-cultural workplaces as follows:
- the learners want to learn what they really need for their career
- authentic and appropriate learning materials should also follow with joyful activities
- to be successful of intercultural communication in diverse workplaces, the learners that take BCC course, have to enable not only to understand/know the knowledge on BCC but also to show their intercultural communicative competence as Business communicators/negotiators

- the learners that gain the intercultural communicative competence could prepare themselves to be ready to cope with the challenges of the global diverse workplaces

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