

Awareness-Raising Technique in Teaching English to ESP Students

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Abstract

College students whose major study not English is called non-English Department students. The non-English department students usually learn English under the branch of ESP (English for Specific Purpose). Teaching and learning English in ESP context is not same with the teaching English as general. ESP is built the process of teaching and learning English of purposes related to students' needs and useful to perform particular job related to their field of study major. But, in fact, since the students' realize that their major is not English; they usually don't interest more in learning English. They think that English is not important to them because there is no correlation with their subject field of study. By that situation, lecturers whose take responsibility in teaching English to non-English department students have to solve that problems. Lecturers can increase student's interests' of English by raising their awareness of learning English. Awareness Raising is activities that can be used by lecturers in order to make the students' notice of English, aware of the useful of English, and make the students' understand of English subject. The concept of awareness-raising comes from cognitive learning theories which argue as a prerequisite for the restructuring of the learners' mental representation of the language. In proposing this, lecturers have to guide ESP students in creating their personal cognitive knowledge of patterns and rules in language. To be effective, the technique of awareness-raising must meet and maintain the mutual needs and interest of the students involved.

Key words: ESP, non-English Department students, Awareness-Raising technique

Introduction

Most universities in Indonesia have English as compulsory subject. The English mastery is important for the students not only while pursuing Stratum-1 degree program, but also when trying to enter the job market after holding the degree. Here, English is taught for non-English Department. In English Department students' learn general English, meanwhile the non-English Department students learn English under the branch of ESP. Most non-English Department students are required to take English in one or two semesters. They are prepared not only to achieve mastery of their own major but also to use English proficiently in oral and written communication. At the end of the course, they have to read reference books that are mostly written in English. Thus, the main focus of teaching English to ESP students is teaching reading.

Related to the teaching of reading at the non-English department, many of researches show that the teaching and learning process are not managed well. It implied that there are some problems. The first comes from the lecturers. They just gave the introduction of the topic at one time, and then they asked the students did the exercise. Next, they mostly gave the students material related to English component, such as: tenses, active and passive sentences, parts of speech, and others, but not focuses on the students need actually. Finally, the lecturers seldom gave the students time to communicate whether in oral or written. Hence, it made the students was being passive.

The second comes from the students. For instance, because the less explanation of the lecturers, when the students tried to understand English texts, they found difficult to comprehend reading materials in English as foreign language. As a result, they do not enjoy it.

Then, the ability of the students to read English texts was very low because the teaching technique used by lecturer seems monotonous; it makes them not focus in reading material. Third, the students are not accustomed to predict before reading. They read text as instructed by the lecturer. Fourth, most of the students are not actively involved in the discussion during the teaching and learning process. They frequently waited for the lecturers' explanation; it makes the students be the passive one.

Moreover, the lecturer had used some techniques in teaching English to non-English department students, but it's not effective yet. They usually used lecturing technique and translation technique that could not make the students' more active and creative. Thus, it is important for lecturers to make students aware of the processes involved in learning English and to help them find environment that suit their needs best. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintain that ESP teachers' job may be to develop a more conscious awareness so that control is gained. Accordance to that opinion, lecturers can try to use technique of awareness raising in order to help ESP students more comprehend of learning English in ESP contexts.

Discussion

A. Language Awareness and Awareness Raising Technique

The concept of language awareness is usually associated with other related concepts, such as knowledge about language, explicit knowledge, metalinguistic awareness, and metalinguistic knowledge (Lyda and Szczesniak, 2014: 15). Related to teaching and learning process, it implies that the role of language awareness in students and teachers continues to be relevant line in enhancing effective learning and teaching. For students, being aware of language seems to facilitate the learning processes leads to enhanced autonomy and generally fosters positive learning outcomes. For teachers, possessing a high level of language awareness is conducive to more effective instruction and better suited to learners' needs and also fosters the pursuit of professional development. Thus, it is clear that language awareness can give more valuable thing in the process of teaching and learning language.

The term Language Awareness is used in the field of Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Acquisition. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, 286) language awareness is a movement that develop in Britain in the 1980s which sought stimulate curiosity about language and to provide links among the different kinds of language experience children typically encountered in school, e.g. in science, in literature, and in foreign language classes. More deeply, language awareness seeks to develop knowledge about language and languages as an important in the education.

Language Awareness is a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in the human life (Svalberg in Lyda and Szczesniak, 2014: 6). It can be defined that language awareness as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use, where conscious knowledge is more emphasized.

At present the term 'awareness' is usually used synonymously with the term 'consciousness' (Lyda and Szczesniak, 2014: 6). In line with Mashhadi and Haghnevis (2011: 1) argues that awareness raising is another term of conscious raising. Awareness raising is not only one type of classroom activity but also exposing students to become aware of the study purposes. And Richards and Schmidt (2002: 109) add that consciousness raising in teaching is a technique that encourage students to pay attention to language form in the belief that an awareness of form will contribute indirectly to language acquisition. Hence, it is clear that awareness raising or conscious raising is regarding to teachers perspective in developing students to be aware in studying English.

The concept of Awareness raising comes from cognitive learning theories which argues as a prerequisite for the restructuring of the learners' mental representation of the language (Zse, 2008: 5). In proposing this, lecturers have to guide students in creating their personal cognitive

knowledge of patterns and rules in language. To be effective, the technique of awareness raising must meet and maintain the mutual needs and interest of the students involved.

As ESP students, non-English department students have to improve their potential in English regarding to their specialization. Bearing to the characteristics of successful students, Waters and Waters (cited in Jordan, 1997: 118) mentioned that the first ability of a successful student was self-awareness. It means that the students need to be consciously aware of the true nature of the learning process as well as the crucial role of acquiring skills and strategies that would certainly engender an effective learning process. So that, lecturers should create the effective way to make the students success in learning English, regarding to this topic is by raising students' awareness in learning English.

Moreover, Jordan (1997, 98) discusses that awareness raising relates to students' learning styles and strategies. In this way, students can be more responsible for their own learning, so that when ESP course finishes, they can continue the learning process more independently and with more self-confidence.

In addition, Sayers (2006, 51) proposes that there are two types of education that are relevant to awareness raising:

1. Formal education: content and skills that are included in school curricula and taught in the context of local issues and needs.
2. Informal education: workshops, presentations and other approaches designed primarily to impart information and skills to adults.

Regarding to that explanation, while lecturers want to apply awareness raising technique in teaching English, thus, it belong to formal education type. The lecturers have to teach English based on concept and context of curriculum that have been approved in university.

In conclusion, awareness raising technique is a technique to inform and educate people about topic that will influence people's attitudes, behaviors beliefs toward the achievement of study purposes.

B. Procedures of Awareness Raising Technique

Lyda and Szczesniak (2014, 8) concern that consciousness raising or awareness raising refer to the teachers' perspective. Here, regarding to non-English department, lecturers must make the students aware of the process involved in language learning and to help them increase their ability that suit of their needs.

Therefore, lecturers can use awareness raising technique in teaching to ESP students. There are some experts suggest the procedures of applying awareness raising technique. First, it is suggested by Saeidi and Jafari (2011: 345) propose the procedures as follow:

1. Lecturers ask some questions related to the content in their first language before going directly to the target text.
2. Students are asked to read the text silently and try to guess the meaning of the new terms since the sentences are exactly related to the warm-up questions in their first language.
3. Students can use strategy, like: activate their background knowledge before reading the sentences in English or translate it, to help them guess the meaning of new words.

They argued that the use of L1 as an awareness raising technique, all the students become both active and motivated in dealing with ESP texts and gained better performance in ESP terms.

In addition, Kindelan (1997: 128) mentions some steps in applying awareness raising technique as follow:

1. Give topic or title to students.
 - a. Tell what they already know about the topic
 - b. They make prediction on what the lecture will about
2. Present technical vocabulary and **Key words** that students may not know.
3. Ask students to write down what they are thinking.
4. Have students respond orally until they are familiar with the topic.

5. Ask students to write their respond in board.
6. Ask them to compare their response with other response.
7. Lecturers lead students the report of topic given.
8. Ask students start to read and take notes while reading and doing the exercise.

He indicated that these activities can expose students to a number of strategies which may help them examine their approach to language learning, improve their language skills as well as monitor and assess their performance in the foreign language, and make the, autonomous in language learning by becoming more conscious or aware of their own mental process in reading.

Moreover Piasecka in Lyda and Szczesniak (2014, 187) applied some procedures in raising student's language awareness as follow:

1. The students were given fragments of a text and asked to read silently to form a general idea of their bit. They were encouraged to try to predict what might have come before and after their text. During this activity, they could consult a dictionary.
2. When the students were ready, they were invited to stand in a circle in front of the classroom and start reading aloud to reconstruct the text. The lecturer was standing outside the circle, prompting students with questions and comments, and taking notes behavior.
3. The students were to decide about the beginning of text, which was not problematic. The individual students read their text and the others had to discuss whether the fragment just read fitted the sequence and logical construction of the text. If it did, they accepted the sequence. If not, they discussed why the text did not fit the sequence and tried other opinion.
4. When the students were having finished the task, they were requested to reflect in writing on how they managed to fit their bits into the text. The written reflections were anonymous.
5. The students' reflection will be investigated by using scheme that proposed by Cross (2010):
 - a. Text awareness
 - i. The questions is followed by the answer
 - ii. The text develop in predictable sequence
 - iii. Events follow by certain sequence
 - b. Comprehension awareness
 - i. Focusing on first/last paragraph/sentences of the text
 - ii. Identifying key words and other important vocabulary items
 - iii. Focusing on text matter
 - iv. Focusing on meaning
 - v. Comprehension monitoring
 - vi. Identifying main idea
 - vii. Predicting
 - viii. Finding relations/dependencies in the text
 - c. Strategic awareness
 - i. Paying attention to the beginning and endings of the text
 - ii. Decide where the slot appear
 - iii. Reading clearly and audibly
 - iv. Inferring word meaning from the context of text,

Piasecka believed that by giving the task itself, conducting discussion, discussing content, reflecting on how the task was completed, will make the students interested in the text, and motivated to do the task as they wanted to learn how the text would progress and end. Beside that, the students also get opportunities to practice reading (by read the text), speaking (by asking question), listening (by listen to friends' explanation or having discussion), and writing (by making notes) in order to achieve a meaningful purposes of the study.

Conclusion

To sum up, in this paper, we offer some procedures of awareness raising technique that can be used by the lecturers in teaching to ESP students. It could lead to a better and more efficient contribution to learning English as Specific Purposes. The lecturers should make the students aware in their activities in learning process, and emphasized to the use of strategy in completion the task given related to ESP materials. Lecturers have to remain that in developing students' awareness, they also have to use authentic and meaningful materials that are more favored by language learners.

Furthermore, the lecturers should keep in mind that regarding to reading in a foreign language (English); the students' experiences with their native language (L1) cannot be ignored. The students usually start reading in English when they can read in their L1 and therefore they are familiar with a variety of text types and text structures, and this knowledge may be helpful when they deal with English text. By combining the procedures of awareness raising technique in teaching to ESP students, we hope that it can encourage students to think for themselves, become more aware, and more critical in learning.

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