

English Days Program (EDP) as a Basis of Developing Students' Foreign Language Awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi

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Abstract

The background of the research is the lack of students' foreign language awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi for improving their speaking ability. Students are nervous and anxiety to practice their English in the speaking class. So that, teacher created English Days Program (EDP). The purpose of the research is to get the information whether the activities in EDP can develop students' language awareness in practicing their English. This research uses qualitative research. The population is the English students in STAIN Bukittinggi and the sample is the students in the second semester academic year 2014-2015. The data collection is the interview by the snowball sampling where the samples are studying speaking in this semester with the researcher as the pioneer of EDP. The result of the research is all informants agree that EDP can develop their English language awareness because they always get the motivation to do that. Besides, they are also helped by the EDPs' systematic systems that control them. So, even though they faced many problems in speaking, they believed that EDP is still a good program to improve their language awareness in English.

Key words: English Days Program (EDP)

Introduction

The Background of the Problem

English Days Program (EDP) is the program which encourages students in English Educational Section at STAIN Bukittinggi to practice their English among English students every day except on Wednesday in the campus area by giving several activities. The background of English Days Program (EDP) is to improve students' speaking skill in communication by applying the English. It is not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

Language teaching must have a goal to improve students' communicative competence. In line with the statement, based on Richard, "Communicative language teaching today refers to a set of generally agreed on principles that can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, their learning goals, and so on". (Richards: 2001). It means, since language teaching should be communicative, teacher should creative to think the different ways to reach the English teaching goals. By activating students to practice the English more than the available time in the class, it will be assumed can improve the aim of English teaching as the ways to increase students' communicative competence. Communicative competence is a kind of the dynamic nature that involves two or more persons in sharing about such meaning. Successful communication would depend mostly on individuals' willingness to express them in the foreign language.

One of the difficulties faced by the students in STAIN Bukittinggi, especially the English students is how they can apply what they have been learned in the class to the outside of the classroom. This term seems difficult for most of the students because they are lack of motivation, strategy, and confidence. It means, to increase their language awareness, the students need a kind of practicing to improve their English especially the speaking skill. Through practicing English everyday, the students can enhance their competency and easily use the language it self in daily communication.

Since EDP wants to improve students' speaking skill in communication by applying the English, it is assumed that EDP can be used as a basis to develop the language awareness of the students. Deal with this case, the researcher wants to get the information about EDP relates to the language awareness with the title "English Days Program (EDP) as a Basis of Developing Students' Foreign Language Awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi".

Discussions

A. English Days Program (EDP)

1. The Background of English Days Program (EDP)

English Days Program (EDP) is formed in 2007. In the first year, the speaking lecturer only controlled this program independently by controlling the students from class to class to know whether the students keep their English or not. Then, in 2008 the speaking lecturer began working with the HMPS department to handle the program.

EDP is based by two approaches in teaching language, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Community Language Learning (CLL), where the CLT approach emphasizes the ability to speak and CLL primarily directed to reduce anxiety of the students to communicate in a foreign language. It is supported by Brown that the basic principle of the methodology is to establish interpersonal relationships between the teacher and learners to facilitate learning. (Brown H.Douglas: 2006). Besides, Community Language Learning was designed to ease the anxiety of Foreign Language Learners in educational contexts and promote group dynamics (Richards: 2001). It means, by the principle of CLL, it showed that the teacher understands the fears of the learner and tried to create the community to master another language. Thus, it concerns on communicative competence and reducing students' anxiety.

To run the program, lecturer works together with HMPS English section created a program, EDP (English Days Program) which provides the opportunity for students English to explore their proficiency in speaking English. In this program, the students have to use English as their daily language with the other English students.

2. The Purposes of English Days Program (EDP)

Based on the background of the English Days Program (EDP) above, there are some purposes of EDP that has been applied by the students in English Educational Section at STAIN Bukittinggi. Deals with this case, this program is aimed to:

- a. Give a chance to the students to take a part in speaking activities inside and outside of the classroom.
- b. Make the students having an English conversation in a big community easily and confidently.
- c. Involve the students in several activities in EDP by giving them opportunity to use English in daily communication.
- d. Invite the members of HMPS (Community of students program) as the organizers and as the model in order to make this program easily to be run by the speaking lecturer.
- e. Continue the program as the regular program of HMPS in every period.

3. The Activities and the Rules in English Days Program (EDP)

Since the main purpose of English Days Program is to increase students speaking skill, there are four activities done to support it. There are; practicing English every day, weekly motivation, seeking and inviting native speakers to the class room, and making vocabulary book notes. Among these four activities, the first, practicing English is the main activity and the three others support this main activity. These all activities are assumed really needed by the students to improve their speaking ability.

Furthermore, there are some rules that must be kept by the students. These rules are needed to solve any kinds of problem deals with the run of the program. The complete rules can be seen as bellow:

1. Students should speak English.

2. Students can use code mixing if they do not know the English.
3. Students make vocabulary booknotes.
4. In the emergency cases, students are allowed to use Indonesian language (do code switching).
5. EDP has a language polices to control the students.
6. Lecturer checks the students who keep EDP in the class.
7. The students who break EDP will be reported by PIC of HMPS in each classes.
8. The name of students who break the rule will be informed every week.
9. HMPS will choose the ten students who are the better ones in keeping EDP and give them the rewards.

B. Foreign Language awareness

1. Definition of Foreign Language Awareness

Language Awareness is really important in language learning because it deals with the conscious perception of the learners to explore the foreign language. Foreign language awareness is defined by the National Council for Language Education (NCLE) as a person's sensitivity to and conscious perception of the nature of language and its role in human life" (James and Garrett eds.1991:xi). Thus, language awareness may be considered as the conscious of the learners to improve their foreign language by exploring and appreciating it.

2. Ways to Improve Students' Language Awareness

There are some ways to improve the language awareness. One of the ways is the optimal program for foreign language students. In this case, immersion becomes an optimal program for foreign language students. It means immersion, as the program that combines the language learning in the class and in the community, can improve the language learners' awareness. It is supported by Richard who says that in the immersions programs, students are placed in content area classes in which the target language is the medium for communication (Richard Amato:1988). So, by this kind of program, the students' awareness can be improved as one of the main goal in language learning.

C. EDP and Students' Awareness in Speaking English

1. Students' Language Awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi

One of the difficulties faced by the students in English educational section at STAIN Bukittinggi is how they can apply the speaking skill outside the classroom. One good solution to solve this problem is by asking them to practice their English because learning a language without practice or training is same with zero. It is stressed by Schmidt (Alice , 2001) who says, "practice seems to be everyone is against condition for fluency in L2 , and this is given a theoretical justification in the model of automatization". However, students' language awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi still low that make them difficult to practice English. So that, EDP is applied to improve the students' awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi. Even though there are some problems in the application, it is assumes that EDP can improve the students' language awareness in STAIN Bukittinggi.

2. Students' Awareness in Practice EDP

As mention above, there are four activities in EDP. There are speaking English, weekly motivation, seeking and inviting native to the campus and vocabulary book notes. It is not easy for the students to apply these four activities. If one aspect is not run well, it influences others. In other words, if the students are lazy making the vocabulary book note, it will influence their English practicing because they are lack of vocabulary. Meanwhile, if they did not get the weekly motivation, the consciousness in practicing English will be in the weak condition. So, these four activities must be run together to get the main goal of the students that is improving their speaking skill.

Furthermore, students' awareness in practicing EDP has a close relation to the conduciveness of the EDP management. The organizers can manage the system well, including the good planning, the responsible organizers, the fluent actuating, and the appropriate controlling; students' awareness will improve well. It can be seen from the spirit of the students to make the planning of the EDP come true. However, there is also a condition where the system is not really conducive. As the result, the students' language awareness is also unsatisfied.

3. EDP to Improve Students Awareness in Speaking English

After doing the interview to the students, there are some information that the researcher gets deal with the EDP relates to the language awareness. It will be classified become four as same as the numbers of activities in EDP. It is described in detail as follow:

a) Speaking English

All students said that their language awareness improve since EDP asks them to speak English based on the available rules in EDP. They said EDP can develop their ability to communicate. In this case, the students feel that they are able to communicate in English fluently and easily better than before.

b) Weekly motivation

As the maintenance of students activities in practicing English, lecturer does motivational activities for students each week. Here, the lecturer provides direction and guidance to the students in order to continue the spirit of the program. Lecturer tries to reduce the feeling of anxiety in the students themselves to use the target language. Here lecturer always sparks students each week, to give directions and motivate students so that they can build confidence and discipline while using English. As the result, the students said that their conscious that English is really important improve. It makes them have higher motivation to practice their English to the better future.

c) Seeking and inviting native to the campus

Students need a good model in practicing English. By applying this activity, students will get a model directly from the native how to utter such words or expression. Besides, they also get much information about the native's culture. Even though it is not easy for them, due to it is used as the requirement to face the final test by the speaking lecturer, they force themselves to seek the native and talk to them. For those who can invite them to the campus, the lecturer will give the extra score to the students. As the result, by sharing information in the class and outside the class with the native, all students said that it really improves their language awareness. However, some difficulties in practicing English sometimes influence them to apply this activity. Thus, basically they realize that seeking and inviting native to the campus can improve their language awareness, however, they need more self confidence and spirit to do that.

d) Vocabulary notebook

Vocabulary notebook is needed by the students to improve their vocabulary mastery. They take the unknown words when practice English in EDP to be the words that should be written down in their vocabulary notebook. Then, they have to find the English on that. So, it is the way to study words in context. It is supported by Bromberg and Gale who say that vocabulary notebook can be helpful to anyone who is conscientiously trying to improve his or her vocabulary. It also can increase the language awareness of the students in improving the vocabulary.(Bromberg& Gale:1998) When students apply this strategy, they are more comfortable to practice English because all problem deals with English words can directly cover by keeping writing vocabulary notebook every day. Even though it needs consistency, since they are discipline to do that, their English vocabulary will improve.

Conclusion

English Days Program (EDP) is a program developed by speaking lecturer who work with HMPS department in order to improve students' speaking ability by reducing the discomfort and anxiety in the students themselves. This program supported by CLL and CLT approach where these approaches aim to increase the confidence of students and improve the ability to communicate with students in English.

The research about EDP relates with the language awareness is needed to know the progress of EDP. After doing the interview, the researcher gets the conclusion that EDP that consists on four activities; speaking English, weekly motivation, seeking and invite the native to the campus and vocabulary notebook can increase the students' language awareness. Even though their awareness always unstable, since the program can be controlled well, the quality and the goal of the program can be reached optimally.

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