

AN ENGLISH COURSE FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH COMPETENCE OF PRODUCTIVE AGE SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

In facing globalization and ASEAN Economic Community, English is urgent to be used in working necessity in Indonesia. The writer tries to find the way how to help people meet this urgency. Then the writer holds such effective English course for those who are in 18-25 years old. The course is aimed at: (1) providing English training to the people concerned to meet the demands of employment; (2) helping to improve human resources; (3) driving the spirit of productive age community to work harder; (4) starting English training implementation for free. The course's learning process uses 30% speaking, 30% writing, 20% listening and 20% reading with 50% English used in teaching. It is assumed that this program is quite effective. They are capable enough to understand and use English after joining the program. This program is very useful to help people in productive age master English in order to get a proper job so as to help the government reduce unemployments.

Keywords: English course, productive age society

INTRODUCTION

Background

The use of English today is not a language of a trend or just an additional language, but at this point English has become the most important language of the world. It become a necessity that cannot be separated from almost all citizens over the world, especially Indonesian. The importance of English is proven by the use of English as a compulsory subject in Indonesia and used in national examination (Shofiyuddin, 2011:1). Besides, Baswedan (2015) stated "*penguasaan bahasa asing khususnya Bahasa Inggris sudah menjadi suatu hal penting dan keharusan dimiliki*

para siswa untuk bisa bersaing mendapatkan pekerjaan di era Masyarakat Ekonomi ASEAN." The statement says that English that must be mastered by every person in Indonesia.

In the globalization era, Indonesian must interact to other citizens in direct or indirect communication, especially in dealing with MEA (ASEAN Economic Community). Consciously or unconsciously, nearly 100% of them use English to interact among citizens from different countries. In addition, mostly all products, technology, information, and everything coming from abroad also facilities offered by citizens from other country use English.

In fact, nowadays English has been absolutely one of the requirements of jobs. It is proved that English has been used by all companies, government agencies or private institutions, or even entrepreneurs both home and abroad as a condition to fulfill the jobs offered. Baswedan expressed “*Era global termasuk di MEA menjadikan penguasaan bahasa asing menjadi salah satu keterampilan yang harus dimiliki siswa sebagai calon pekerja atau pengusaha. Tanpa keterampilan bahasa itu dipastikan akan sulit bersaing*”. It is like what the writer has found 30 samples of jobs taken randomly from some media on internet as survey, the list factually showed that the whole companies or agencies offered job vacancies for people in the productive age work who master the English language both from undergraduate program and senior high. It is also proven by one citizen. He is a citizen graduated from high school. When he applied for a job in one of major companies in , he was interviewed in English, then he was rejected because of being not able to answer the questions given to him and could not interact in English even though the terms of acceptance had been acceptable. Similarly, it illustrates that currently English has become a real necessity that must be mastered by everyone who wants to work in a company or agency although they are only able to use receptive English.

On the other hand, there are many people or companies in Indonesia or abroad use English as a daily spoken language. The demands of corporate management that requires every worker must master English properly and correctly, either in writing or speaking. Thus, we should be able to socialize on the application of English to public in order to live in Indonesia, especially in the productive working age. 18-25 years old are the ages of productive

community; and be used as minimum and maximum thresholds in terms of jobs in reality often offered. However there are still many of them are unemployed around us. It is not absolutely because they are too lazy to find a job or do not want to work, but they do not get the job or are rejected. The difficulty of selection in getting a job could be because the majority of them cannot meet the entry requirements requested by a company or a related agency. one of them is being able to use english.

By these realities in life and our minds, the writer wants to help the community by using an english course for improving english competence of productive age societies. Beside knowing the effectiveness of using an English course to improve the communities’ English competence, he can also help them using it. The goals to be achieved in this community engagement program through a free course are: 1) To know whether an English course is able to help people in productive age improve their English competence and 2) To know how an English course is able to help people in productive age improve their English competence.

Community in Productive Age of Work

Taken from Cambridge dictionary, productive is the resulting in or providing a large amount or supply of something. Meaningly, productive age is the age when a person is able to work and produce something. So the definition of "persons in productive age" is people who are in the age having ability to produce. In this case the point meant is jobs. In the labor law number 13 In 2003, they were classified as workers, in the age between 15 years to 64 years.

It can be concluded that people in the productive age of work are people who are in the age between 15 to 64 years who are able

to work and produce something. In this community engagement activity, the writer chose people in the age of 18 to 25 as a trainee by those ages which become the minimum and the maximum of most jobs offered by companies or agencies.

English Teaching

Traditionally, teaching is defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or to understand (Brown, 2007:1). No definition is very simple and does not regard the role of learner who is learning. The purpose of English Learning in Indonesia as noted in *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional (Permendiknas) No. 22/ 2006* about Content Standard of Elementary and Intermediate level is to make the students develop the four language competence (reading, writing, listening and speaking). It is in order to make them literate and communicative in certain level of literacy.

Dixson (1860:5) notes at an International Seminar organized by UNESCO (United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) to discuss the teaching of modern languages, the general principles were subscribed to by the majority of the delegates. Further he mentioned principles as follows: 1) the approach – to the teaching of all foreign languages – should be primarily oral, 2) active methods of teaching should be used as far as possible, 3) the greatest possible use of the foreign tongue should be made in the classroom, 4) the difficulties of the foreign tongue in the matter of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar should be carefully graded for presentations, and 5) the teaching of a language should be considered most as the imparting of a skill than as the provision

of information about he forms of the language.” It means that in teaching English, the teacher has to consider about: oral activity that is more emphasized than writing activity in learning English, active learning, classroom activity, attention of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and the enhancement of the four language competence. Thus, in this program, the participants did not only learn about written language but also spoken language by practicing in the learning process. Beside, spoken was used around 50% in the process.

The Timeline of Program Implementation

This program is implemented within a period of three months. Before implementing the program, it is preceded by a survey realized at least two weeks before the day of training. It is intended to determine the number of citizens who needed English skills and ability training to follow the course. The survey is conducted by logging the number of people who are in the productive age of work and where the average economic ranking is. Besides, it includes data collection about the work of the majority of the community. After conducting the course, it is completed with reporting and submission of recommendations to the government within two weeks after the program is completed.

DISCUSSION

The Target of the Program

The chosen community for this program by English course is people in the productive age of work who were productive and still in searching jobs. Productive age of work here means 18-25 years old. Those ages are ages which are most often required to fill job offered in the companies or agencies. On the other hand they are the people who are still vulnerable to

unemployment, because they cannot meet the requirements which are something of jobs offered, in this case should be able to use English.

The reason for selecting the object and the target number is based on the state of human resources, economic, and also based on the consideration of the allocation of funds. The people selected is assumed to be more in need of English to find employment. In this case, the writer choose the objects to carry out the program in the hope that this activity would be able to help the community concern particularly to meet the demands of jobs so that they would get more value and competent in using English as well as get a better chance to be able to work in a company or agency.

Implementation of the Program

This program uses the naturalistic approach, which according to Lindeman (1925) is "Adult education will become an agency of progress if its short-term goal of self-improvement can be made compatible with a long-term, experimental but resolute policy of changing the social order". Thus, adult learning techniques is learning how to make learning processes in tune with the real life. The activity was carried out with the shape of fun activities.

This English course activity is carried out in the form of a training activity of English for people in productive age. The program covered the following agendas: 1) deliberating preparation and implementing publication, 2) opening ceremony, 3) learning activities, 4) closing ceremony, 5) Reporting and Submission of Recommendations.

Expected Results of the Program Implementation

As the formulations of the problem in the program, it is the hope that people would be able to get more values and competences in using English as well as to get a better chance to be able to work in a company or agency. In this case, it is particularly at the time of interview. On the implementation of the program followed by people in the productive age of work, the number of participants on the implementation of this program expectedly can reach 50 participants.

In applying this community engagement program by English course to people, the writer used a course activity as a means to help the citizen in the productive age. The technique used in the learning process tended to use collaborative learning. It is assumed that collaborative learning is a great way for the training program. In the end, the program could run in accordance with the previous plans of methods, techniques, and schedule. This program will produce some of the community in the productive age of work to be able to use and understand English in the form of conversations and written. It is shown by the practice and exam form of writing, listening, reading, and speaking applied in the end of the learning activities.

The meeting of learning program was held three times a week, having 2 hours for each meeting. Besides, collaborative learning technique is applied in the learning process as being planned earlier. The process of delivering the material in the first month used 30% English. In the second part, materials delivery increased by 50% to try to use English in the learning process. On this stage the participants can absorb what is presented in the learning. Then in the third month, the levels of using English in the delivery of materials increased to 85%. At first, the participants have a little trouble in

understanding the material presented. But by the time goes away, eventually they can catch what is explained to them in the learning process. In addition they must try to speak and to ask to use English as in the implementation of classroom lesson. While, the classroom is set as English area, where both the participants and the teachers must use English in communication, at least while in the classroom. They will get punishment like memorizing irregular verbs, explaining a material (which they can), and singing a song (English song) if they were deliberately not to use English in class or during the learning.

Based on the point of this program, it was an activity program to provide English provision to community in the productive age of work, especially in the field of speaking. That is because now a lot of companies require applicants who master English. Similarly, the evidence is proven by the interview. Then even if only as a shopkeeper or cashier they are expected to be able to speak English even though by basic English. Especially for those who want to go abroad and work in a big city such as Jakarta, Surabaya, etc. The program is also intended to encourage and to give stimulus to the participants to learn and improve their English so that human resources a city, especially and in our country generally can be increased and better.

The Presented Materials

As being mentioned above that the activities of this program would be implemented for 3 months with the frequency of meetings, 3 times in one week that lasted 2 hours in one meeting. The composition in learning used: 30% speaking, 30% writing, 20% listening and 20% reading with the delivery of an average of 50% in English. while the materials presented are: introduction, greeting, giving and asking

direction, description, expression, giving opinion, retelling story, free conversation, dialogue, speech and discussion, part of speech, tenses, modal auxiliary, gerund, preference, tag question, direct-indirect, relative pronouns, writing a letter, listening music, listening cassettes dialog, watching movies, reading text, as the materials are basic materials and principal in the mastery of the English language. Meanwhile, in the training process, as being noted earlier, that every meeting was divided into two parts, the main class and tutorial class. Besides, the course will end by evaluations

Program Implementation Phase

This community engagement program is implemented by the total overall time for 4 months, which is divided into preparation and surveying, publications and collecting data, implementation of learning, program evaluation, and reporting. Specifically for the implementation of training, it took 3 months.

- a. Preparation and survey. This stage is conducted in order to determine the condition and the situation of the target and the adjustment program implementation. Here, the citizens help in the stage of collecting data collection as required.
- b. Publications and data collection. It is carried out at the same time as the preparation and survey. On the implementation of publication, it includes people (candidates or targets), the government, and some of the city. This activity is done in order to determine who participates in these activities with number of them.
- c. Implementation of training programs. It is carried out after preparation, surveys, publications, as well as the determination of the participants. Learning program is started by the event of opening ceremony in the

middle of the first month. On this occasion is attended by the city chief and his staff, people around the implementation place, and participants of the program. In the opening ceremony it conveys some information, i.e. about the program objectives, frequency and timing of the training program, the materials to be delivered, and the technique of delivery. Then, this agenda is followed by the implementation of the program in the next meeting until the middle of the last month.

d. Evaluation. The evaluation is conducted within the learning programs as well as at the end of the program. It includes, measuring, testing and assessing the participants. It is hoped that the implementation of the learning program on English skills and mastery for the community or participants always increases from the beginning until the end of the implementation.

Encountered Problems

In carrying out this training, problems may be found is the interest in learning of the community in productive age or the participants is in getting ups and downs. So before conducting the program, it is better to ensure the participants' interest.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

After discussing about the cases and the conducting the program, it can be concluded that: 1) English language training to people in the productive age of work can help such communities improve their ability to use English, 2) English training to people in productive age of work can be done through intensive course, 3) English competences they got can help them as a foundation in searching a job, in which so far have been a lot of jobs using English as

necessity to be accepted in a company or agency, and 4) These activities can help the government improve human resources.

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