EXPERIENCE FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMERSION PROGRAM AS A GLOBAL TRAJECTORY

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to uncover there main research questions; how was the immersion program of* ICAI *conducted to improve English language skills?, How was the view point of the participant in carrying out the program, and how effective was the program to achieve English language skills. This research was analyzed descriptively by using questionnaire, observation, and interview. The results showed that the immersion program was well conducted and gave some improvement in the mastery of English language skills especially speaking skills. The participants also gave a positive point of view that it helped to improve their English expertise. Based on the questionnaire and observation, there are also several other improvements such as teaching techniques mastery, English delivery in content-area teaching and their confidence to use English as a means of communication for their content-area teaching in the classroom. In conclusion, the program has boosted the participants to increase their speaking skill.*

Keyword: *speaking skills, immersion, training, SLA*

Background

Sekolah Tinggi Penerbangan Indonesia or Indonesia Civil Aviation Institute (henceforth ICAI) is one of aviation schools that is organized under the ministry of transportation that has long been endorsed trainings and educations to provide human resources in aviation industry. ICAI has produced countless skillful persons; mostly are local student, some regional and few of them are international students. The demand of aviation personnel has regularly increased from time to time both locally and internationally. In this case, ICAI needs to provide more qualified trainers and lecturers to make a betterment in all aspects including the use of English as the instructional language, to teach content-area. Therefore, ICAI has a strong concern in increasing the quality of the lecturers through improving lecturers' English skills by creating a program which is theoretically called as immersion program.

Immersion itself is simply defined as a situation in which language learners stay in the area of native speakers of a dominant language (Piske & Young-Scholten 2009; Järvinen, 2005; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). It is believed that as speakers of one language are immersed in a setting dominated by speakers of another language, given a high exposure of language contact, the acquisition of the foreign language typically takes place in an easy and natural manner.

In this program, the foreign language is the vehicle for content instruction; it is not the subject of instruction (Perez, 2004). Teachers speak only the target language to teach academic subjects, using a wide range of instructional strategies. The ultimate goal of this type of program is for students to become proficient in the target language that is English, and to develop cultural awareness while reaching a high level of academic achievement (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). However, it should be born in mind that before conducting immersion program, there are some important preparations to successfully achieve the goal of the program. It is preparing human resources (Cummin, 2003). They are required to enable to function adequately and the continued high level of commitment of all involved in the program, from policy-makers to lecturers and cadet.

Two problematic areas have been noted if ICAI want to expand its gait internationally, These relate to the quality of English oral and written skills that both cadets and lecturers attain. However, one main issue that will be focused on is of lecturers' English skills. It becomes a lecturer is as facilitator during the teaching and learning process that should be well-prepared. Therefore, human resources development division in ICAI initiated a program to improve lecturer's English skills as a global trajectory in providing international training.

Unfortunately, cadets, staff personnel, lecturers, particularly non-English lecturers and those who are involved in the training and education activities are not ready with their English. Some of the lecturers and school personnel are still lack of English language mastery. To overcome this problem, Indonesia Civil Aviation Institute have made a strong mutual

partnership with RMIT English Worldwide (REW), Melbourne Australia. ICAI sent some lecturers to REW for several days. They were not only trained their English skills but also a teaching methodology. The goal is to improve the ability of speaking because being proficient to speak in English is a prerequisite to go for international training provider. The proficiencies in speaking are two kinds; basic interpersonal conversation skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language skills. In this program, BICS is the ultimate goal for the lecturers to improve their speaking ability (Cummin, 1996).

Research Method

The purpose of this study is to give a practical contribution to all lecturers and instructors especially when they are teaching in the classroom. It is expected to give a new insight on the teaching of content area thorough English delivery in the classroom and also can give worthy and beneficial practice for all lecturers and instructors in delivering their knowledge by using English fluently. Besides, it is also intended to give theoritical point of view on the implementation of immersion program in the area of second language acquisition. Therfore, the researcher conducted the study descriptively.

This research began by doing the literature analysis that focused on the area of second language acquisition. From the literature analysis, the first instrument was highlighted as an interview guide to retrieve some experiences of the participants on the implementation of the training. The next step was creating and disseminating the

second instrument in the form of questionnaires to identify students' perceptions of the program, then performed data processing to the questionnaires. The last step was report writing. The study involved 16 participants who came from different majors in Indonesian civil aviation institutes. All of them are lecturers and instructors. 6 participants are from Aviation Safety Division, two persons are from Aviation Management Division, and eight people are from Aviation Engineering Division. Three main reserach questions are used as guidline in this study:

1. How was the program conducted to improve English language skills?
2. How was the view point of the participant in carrying out the program?
3. How effective was the program to achieve English language skills?

Data Collection Technique

The researcher used google form to get data from questionaire then spreaded the link to participants http://goo.gl/forms/FzapEFrZaSYpvhkS2. The items of the questionaire were organized based on theoritical framework on language acquisition. Therfore, credibility and dependebality of the questionaire are agreed. Furthermore, the researcher also used direct observation technique. In these parts, the researcher was directly involved as a participant and observed his colleagues naturally so as they were not aware of being observed and interviewed. It is intended to get the data authentically without any bias. Therfore

data were qualitatively dependable and credible.

Data Analysis

Having gathered the data, the researcher analyzed all responds from the participants descriptively by qualifying and describing all items of the questioners into four main categories; factors affecting successful learning English program, material, expected English skills mastery, and lecturer's qualification and strategies in teaching. After describing the data, the researcher compared to some relevant theories to support the discussion.

Discussion

Results of the research potrayed all trainee's' point of view toward the implementation of the training at REW. The results were elaborated based on data that has been retrieved through questionaire, observation and interview.

Based on the questionnaires, the participants understand the goal of the training. Almost 67% of participants strongly understand the objective of the training, 18,8% understand and only 12, 5 % did not understand the goal of the the training. It means that the training was relatively well-defined either by ICAI or REW. It is important to know the purpose of the training in order that the participants achieve the skills required by institution. In this case, the requirement and the outcome of the training can be matched. In another hand, all participants were actively involved in the training, they were encouraged to follow every single day of the program.

Data shows that 100 % of the participants were encouraged. It means

that the training was motivating and interesting for them. As the researcher suggested that motivation is important to boost language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Students will learn a language by themselves in order to achieve true mastery of the language (Gardner, 2007).

Further result showed that, the training was considered relevant for participants since the coverage subjects were related to aviation. It was indicated by data that 100% of participants considered that the subjects are suitable with their background knowledge and working area. Background knowledge is ultimate in sucsessfull learning process because it makes the participants can understand the subject matter with ease (Roever, Wang, & Brophy, 2014; Burgoyne, Whiteley, & Hutchinson, 2013). Besides, the content of the subjects was also well organized and easy to understand. It was captured by the result of finding that shows 100% of the participants agree that the textbook used during the training was relevant. Textbook is important to help students understand to learn the appropriate ways of thinking, behaving, doing, valuing, and being in the world (Widodo, 2018). However, it doesn't mean that the training was easy. It becauses that the trainer in REW has successfully scaffolded participants to be independent learners. The trainer gave some variety of techniques and methods during the process so as the participants were relatively lenient in taking part on the training. Scaffolding is important to make students step forward in acquiring new concepts with the help of other (Burns & Siegel, 2018; Jacob &

Renandya, 2016). The materials were also helpful for participants. 100 % said that the materials help them understand more about the aviation. In this case, suitability of teaching materials is also significant to foster learners' confidence and skills in identifying and addressing important issues in their own communities (Appleby, 2018). It typically draws on learner interests and local contexts to shift from teacher-assigned materials and activities to tasks based on materials which participants design, initiate and complete themselves under the guidance of a teacher-facilitator.

In relation to how much useful the training is towards their work field, all of them believe that experiences given during training have given a positive contribution to their work field. Many said that experiences during training specifically experinces in the classroom can be brought into their own class such as how to motivate students, giving a variety of task to students that can make them curious, giving instructions in English with various expressions and the likes. It means that the program has given some benefits that directly contribute to teaching method mastery of the participants. The methods might further be implemented in their own teaching context.

It is very much worthwhile to recognize how the teacher teach the participants with various backgrounds. In general, teacher's teaching strategies appear to be almost similar to the usual classroom teaching activities. Some of participants commented that the practice of teaching English was fun and joyful. The class sometimes managed into several groups to conduct presentation for practicing speaking skills for academic purposes. In a meanwhile, the class was also arranged into some groups to conduct role play for practicing daily conversation. These strategies have come up with a satisfactorily result for them to learn English peaking skill. About 88% respondents stated that the qualification of the teacher is good because he is expert in his field as she is a master TESOL in English Education. Only 12% of the participants disagreed that the teacher is knowledgeable about the topics delivered during training. It because teacher doesn't have any background knowledge about aviation. Thus, in a certain occasion, she often asked participants dealing with some specific terms in aviation. Theoretically said that a good teacher knows the subject they are teaching, but, even more importantly, knows how to teach it. Therefore, teachers' qualification and professionalism become important for the benefit of their students' growth (Avalos, 2011).

Although the objective of the training was well defined, in a certain degree for a few participants, the goals of training did not meet their expected English skills. There are 12.5 % of participants disagreed that they achieved what they need for training. However, most of them were very confident that their English skills were improved especially speaking skills. Therefore, there are 81,3% of the participants were confident and believe that they are able to teach their students in English.

Participants of the training stayed in homestays. It is intended that they will find a high exposure in English language.

Based on the result of the questionnaire, 75 % of participant agree that the program should follow homestay system to expose daily english usage. In a meanwhile, 25% disagreed that the participants should take a homestay. It is because of time allocation for training was longer than at homestay. Participants didn't have much time to mingle with the host after coming to the homestay. So they have lack of chance to communicating with tenants. A few of them said that high exposure in English language with the host was beyond expectation. They didn't get much advantage with the homestay system. Therefore, most of the participants who stayed in a homestay didn't actually expose themselves in a real life of native English conversations. Gass & Selinker (2008) suggest that high exposure English environment is a key succes in language acquisition. Therfore, we need to consider the time allotment between training and homestay.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the training was successfully done and has given valuable experience for participants. There are also some improvements in English skills especially speaking skills. Somehow, speaking skills that have been improved was very narrow. It encompassees that the participants are able to give instruction in English, participants are able to manage the class in English. Some of them are able to teach content area teaching in English. Thus the training was beneficial for two week-period in increasing lecturer's speaking skill.

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Appendix

Online questionare can be scanned through the following QR Code:

Scan me

For participants in RMIT English Worldwide (REW) Aviation English Trainings

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below

No	Statements	Strongly agree	agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The objectives of the training were clearly defined				
2	Participation and interaction were encouraged				
3	The topic covered were relevant to me				
4	The content was organized and easy to follow				
5	The materials distributed were helpful				
6	This training experience will be useful in my work				
7	The trainer was knowledgeable about the training topics				
8	The trainer was well prepared				
9	The training objective met with your expected English skills				
10	I've got improvement in English skills especially speaking				
11	I believe that by following the training will improve my English skills				
12	I am confident to teach my subject in English				
13	Homestay system was very useful to improve my English skills especially speaking				
14	The book that was used in training was relevant				