THE NEED FOR NEEDS ANALYSIS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN ESP COURSE: A REFLECTION ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: Curriculum development as the guide to instructional implementation should be able to 'bridge the gaps' of the needs among the parties in teaching learning process. Needs analysis is then a crucial step in curriculum development. It includes the needs of the intitution, the target needs, and for the most, the learners' needs. Indonesian curriculum may change as the result of the current situation or policy, yet the concern remain the same, that is to identify needs and accomodate those needs. Introduction on curriculum development, a brief review on ESP, discussion on needs analysis, and reflection of the curriculum development in Indonesia related to needs analysis would be delivered in this article.

Keywords: Need Analysis, Curriculum Development, ESP

Curriculum changes has been a common practice in Indonesia. Curriculum development as an ongoing process should always be evaluated and adapted in accordance with the demands and changes that occur in society. It is widely aggreed that one essential consideration in developing curriculum is evaluating needs. The needs may includes the needs of the approach in the curriculum itself, the needs of the institution, the needs of the stakeholders (the target woking places), and the most essential one is the needs of the learners. In English Language Teaching (ELT), especially in English for Specific Purposes, the identification of needs has been the initial and the most importance part in curriculum development. Needs analysis is the term for the process of identifying needs.

Needs analysis is a crucial stage in ESP curriculum development. A strong statement delivered by the US Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (2009). It states that without needs analysis, wonderful curriculum could be developed, but the appropriate needs of the target audience may not be met. Similarly, Klionsky (2009, in Weimer, 2014) complained the inadequacy of the curriculum in meeting the needs.

"Curricular development ... no longer involves rational and integrated course design. New courses are added based on faculty members' expertise rather than students' needs... .And typically, no one has a clue as to what is taught in other courses in the curriculum, and certainly no idea at all as to what has been learned in previous courses. The result of this approach is chaos, repetition, and wasted time and effort by both students and faculty members."

(Klionsky, 2009, in Weimer, 2014)

From the statement, it can be conluded that the identification of needs in ESP curriculum development is a must. Without it, the development of the curriculum is useless.

This article will discuss the importance of needs analysis in ESP curriculum development and its reflection on Indonesian curriculum. The content will give brief review on ESP, the curriculum development in ESP, needs analysis, and the reflection.

BRIEF REVIEW ON ESP

It is hard to give a firm definition of what ESP is. Many researchers on ESP have proposed different definitions. Yet, none of the definition can be agreed by all the ESP members. A debate had occurred during the Japan Conference on ESP (1997) (Nodoushan, 2006). It was reported that people have interpreted the meaning of ESP differently. Some ESP scholars described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Others however, were more precise, describing it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational purposes. The different interpretations might be because ESP is pluralistic. Many approaches to ESP are simultaneously being followed around the world today. The full form of 'ESP' is generally given as 'English for Specific Purposes', and this would imply that what is specific and appropriate in one part of the globe may well not be elsewhere. Thus, it is impossible to produce a universally applicable definition of ESP. Strevens (1980, in Komarova &. Lipgart, 1994) suggests that 'a definition of ESP that is both simple and watertight is not easy to produce.

Robinson (1991, in Li, 2006) defines ESP as a goal oriented language teaching. A broad definition is given by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). They define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. Similarly, Numby (1978, in Li, 2006) thinks that ESP courses are those where the syllabus and materials are determined in all essentials by the prior analysis of the communication needs of the learner. Both Hutchinson & Waters and Numby necessitate a learners' needs analysis. Holme (1996, in Portaca, 2008) states that teaching and learning ESP represent a continuum of general English on a higher, more specified

level, integrating occupational, linguistic and social skills in order to prepare students for work and life. Thus the aim of ESP teaching is to introduce students to the kind of English they will meet in real situations in their future professions or need for their further education. This view tends to be a Target Needs oriented.

In spite of the differences in the definition, all practitioners in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) agree in one thing. Every ESP curriculum development should be based on an analysis of needs (Hutchinson & Water, 1987; Robinson, 1989; Richards, 1989; Xenodohidis, 2006; Stapa, 2003) .

"… the content of any ESP course should only be determined by a comprehensive needs analysis as this first step is seen as being absolutely crucial if ESP practitioners wish to design a course that will maximally benefit their learners."
(Wright, 2001 in Kaur, 2008)

Further discussion will show how the needs is so importance in the curriculum development. Yet, the discussion on curriculum development need to be firstly stated.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN ESP.

According to the Indonesian Institution of National Education Standards (2006), curriculum is a set of plans and rules about the goals, content, teaching materials, and the methods used to guide the implementation of instructional activities on achieving certain educational goals, its certain goals include the national education goals in accordance with the local potential needs, education unit and learners.

Whereas, curriculum development is a comprehensive, on-going, cyclical process "to determine the needs of a group of learners; to develop aims or objectives for a program to address those needs; to determine an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials; and to carry out an evaluation of the language program that results from these processes" (Richards, 2001, p.2). from the definition, it can clearly be seen that there is an importance of analysing needs as the intial and ongoing process of curriculum development. Specifically, in English for Specific Purposes course, Wright (2001, dalam Kaur, 2008) firmly states that the content of any ESP course should only be determined by a comprehensive needs analysis as this first step is seen as being absolutely crucial if ESP practitioners wish to design a course that will maximally benefit their learners. In other words, curriculum development should be viewed as a process by which meeting the learning needs.

Teaching ESP means achieving a variety of objectives: acquiring knowledge about the language, developing and practicing all four language skills, getting language and cultural awareness, integrating

specialist knowledge and communicative skills and even enriching the overall knowledge (Almabekova, 2006). How can these objectives be accommodated in the ESP class? How should the curriculum be developed? Acoording to US Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (US NRMED, 2009), ESP curriculum development process systematically organizes what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. Each component affects and interacts with other components. For example, what will be taught is affected by who is being taught (e.g., their stage of development in age, maturity, and education). Methods of how content is taught are affected by who is being taught, their characteristics, and the setting. Furthermore, US NRMED (2009) states some essential consideration for curriculum development. It includes the identification of 1) the need (what), 2) the characteristics and needs of learners (target audience/ who), 3) the intended outcome/objectives, 4) the importance and relevant content, 5) methods to accomplish the intended outcomes (how), and 6) the evaluation strategies. These essential considerations are in line with Graves' systematic curriculum design which consist of six steps, including: 1) conducting needs assessment, followed with needs analysis (both of the process sometimes just called needs analysis), 2) determining the goals and objectives of the course, 3) conceptualizing the content, 4) selecting and developing materials and activities, 5) organizing the content and activities, and 6) evaluating (Graves, 1996, in Xenodohidis, 2006). Again, analysing needs has become the first step in developing ESP curriculum. Due to to importance of needs and needs analysis in ESP, further discussion would discuss both of them simultaneously.

NEEDS ANALYSIS: WHAT, WHY, HOW?

What distinguished ESP from General English is not the existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The awareness will have an influence on what will be acceptable as reasonable content in language course and, on positive side, what potential can be exploited. In short, any ESP course should be based on an analysis of needs.

Definition of needs varies. Robinson, summarizing the works of Berwick, 1989; Bridley, 1989; Mountford, 1981; and Widdowson, 1981, states that needs can mean the students' study or job requirements, that is, what they have to be able to do at the end of their course. This is goal-oriented definition of needs. Needs is also what the user-institution or society at large regards as necessary or desirable to be learnt from a programme of language instruction. Needs can also be considered as what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language. This is a process-oriented definition of needs and relates to transitional behaviour, the

means of learning. Another definition of needs is what the students themselves would like to gain from language course. Finally, needs may be interpreted as lacks, that is, what the students do not know or cannot do in English. Lacks may also refer to the gap between what is desired and the requirements. The techniques and result of a needs analysis depend on the view of the needs being taken by the observer.

Different experts propose different definition of needs analysis. Richards (1987) define needs analysis as the process of determining the needs of language required by a person or a group of learners. Similarly, Hutchinson & Waters and Munby, as have already mentioned previously, necessitate a learners' needs analysis; that is obtaining the data and assigning value to those data. The needs analysis provides the teacher with the basis on which to construct the new knowledge. By using what the students know, the teacher will explain, exemplify, and conceptualize the knowledge to be conveyed (Swales, 1985, in Xenodohidis, 2006). Therefore, the first issue to elaborate on is the students' needs and ways of assessing and addressing them effectively.

Needs analysis also sees the target in which the language is going to be used. William and Swales (in Robinson, 1984) sees needs analysis as a 'target-centered' in which there is a process of determining the jobs descriptions, language functions and language expression needed in the job. Further, Munby (in Robinson, 1984) states that needs analysis is conducted in order to identify the 'present situation' and the 'target situation' so that the students able to use the language to smoothen the activities in the job.

The difference definitions and terms do not change the focus of the needs analysis those are students and the place they are going to work (target). In order to be a good telephone operator, the knowledge about the job's description, language functions, and language expressions of the job need to be identified. In order to identify the language function in a certain jobs, a needs analysis is needed. If needs are clear, the learning aims can be expressed more easily and the language course can become motivating.

Why do we, then, need to conduct needs analysis? According to Richard (2002, in Lekatompessy, 2010) basically, needs analysis in language teaching may be used for a number of different purposes, such as:

- To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student
- To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students
- To determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills

- To identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important
- To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they needs to be able to do
- To collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing

In learning a language, the ultimate aim is to be able to utilize the language in day-to-day tasks and most importantly career demand. The needs of the students are crucial to ensure that learning takes place and the learners achieve their long-term goals. In a long- term goal, learners will experience the need to communicate in the target language outside of classrooms. Besides that, they also realize that there are vast opportunities career wise. It is evident that there is a necessity to identify the goals of the learners in language classrooms particularly because it does in a way determine the success of a language programme. Krashen (2009) found that ESL students' vocabulary, writing and spelling improve through extensive reading and the indication here was that using language extensively and for real purposes helps one to learn more of the language. When learning is meaningful, learners are expected to have greater intake based on input. According to Krashen (2009) comprehensible input is the causative variable in second language acquisition. The central issue to ESP is the necessary starting point in materials and course design. This is important because practitioners have to be selective at specific content-based materials and topics to ensure relevance

Hence, it is evident that the role of needs analysis in an ESP setting is crucial as the focus is very much on learners and also the language and linguistics skills and items. Furthermore, analysing the language requirement in profession and analysing students' needs are important as to match suitability and to verify the contents necessary for the ESP course. It is vital that a comprehensible needs analysis be conducted to ensure that materials and course design later reflect ESP rather than general or EAP courses for higher learning students.

How are needs analysis conducted? The type of information sought during a needs analysis is usually closely related to the approach to teaching and learning and to curriculum design followed by the analysis (Robinson, 1991). As what have been stated previously, the teaching-learning process should be tailored to the needs of the students themselves and to the target (i.e. the specific language, situation, user/stakeholder, teaching establishment, etc). Therefore, the needs analysis should be conducted to those areas.

Needs analysis includes a wide variety of techniques for collecting and analyzing information, both learners and about language. In general,

there are two main approaches in conducting needs analysis, language-centered and learner-centered needs analysis. In language-centered needs analysis, the information about the linguistic features of the target situation (i.e. what the learner needs to do in the target situation) is identified. This type of needs is called as necessities. Necessities is the type of need determined by the demand of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). It is a matter of observing what situation the learners need to function in and the analyzing the constituent parts of them. It may involve the identification of linguistic features of the target situation.

The learner-centered needs analysis is based on the principle that learning is totally determined by the learner. Learning, therefore, is an internal process, which is crucially dependent upon the knowledge the learner already have and their ability and motivation to use it (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This type of need is called as wants. Richterich (1984, in Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) defines wants as images of students' needs on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environment.

Both needs analyses, learning needs analysis and target needs analysis, have weaknesses and actually complimentary to each other. Hutchinson and Water give an analogy of designing curriculum as a journey to a goal. The target needs analysis can determine the destination. It can also act as a compass on the journey to give general direction. However, it also needs to know the route according to vehicles and guides available (i.e. the condition of the learning situation), the existing roads within the learner's mind (i.e. their knowledge, skills and strategies), and the learner motivation for travelling which can only be revealed from an analysis of learning needs.

It would be better to combine the two analyses. In his learning-centered approach course design, Hutchinson & Waters show the combination of these two analyses. The diagram can be seen below:
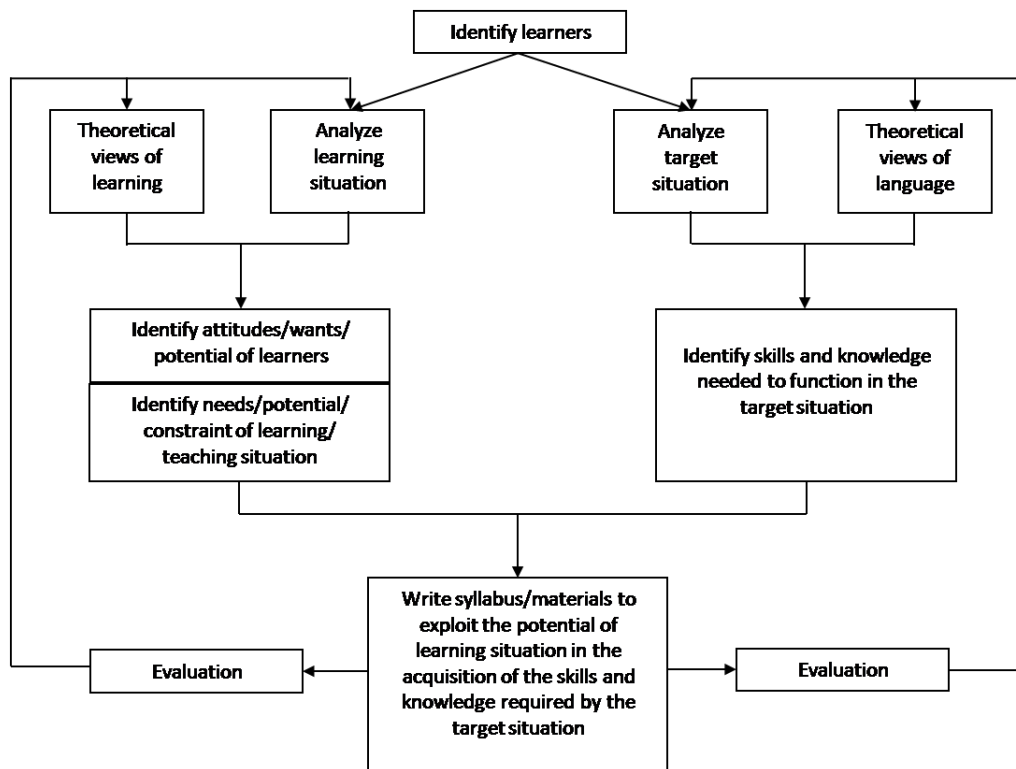
Figure 2.1. Hutchinson & Water's Learning-Centered Approach to Course Design Diagram

In this approach, the curriculum is design based on the learning and target needs analysis. The analyses are also based on the theoretical views of learning and language. Based on the analysis, the curriculum is written considering the wants, potential, and necessities required. Evaluation should also be conducted to improve the teaching and learning process.

REFLECTION ON THE INDONESIA CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The national curriculum of Indonesia had undergone change several times. Mostly, the curriculum changes in Indonesia are due to logically consequences of political issue, government system, social cultural, economic, science and technology change in the living of state community (Soekisno, 2007, in Lekatompessy, 2010). The common apporach of the curriculum development is top-down approach in which the goverment states and delivered the several minimum standards requirements to schools which have to be followed. On higher education, the curriculum development is more flexible in which the decission of how the curriculum is developed is based on the policy of the institution/campus. Still, there are guidances from the goverment which need to be followed.

The question now is that whether or not the needs analysis is one of the main concern in the national curriculum of Indonesia? In spite of the increasing demand for English language teaching, this situation has not

invoked sufficient research in ESP, especially the needs of various groups of learners or people who need to have sufficient command in English (Astika 1999). Moreover, According to (Marwan, 2009) although ESP has been taught in Indonesian vocational higher institutions for many years, there is little information on the challenges teachers face in their ESP teaching, especially in curriculum development and the needs analysis. Related to material developments, studies by Mahardika (2013, 2010) showed that there was a minimum concern on conducting needs analysis in developing ESP books and special term dictionaries in hospitality industry especialy related to hotellier. ESP books related to hotel industry are mostly adapted from the Western countries, in which the culture are different from Indonesian. The specific needs of the curriculum objectives are also cannot be fully accomodated by the books. There is a need to improve the number of study related to needs analysis in ESP curriculum development.

Mahardika (2010) stated that the need to address the needs analysis in curriculum development in ESP is further neccesitated by the fact that the English proficiency of the Hotel department students in Bali has not satisfactory. In relation with the issue, an article released by the branch of Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) (1999) in Bali, mentioned that there is still a 'gap' of what is being taught at school and what is assigned in industry. The low frequency of consultation between curriculum designer and the output-users is considered one of the sources of the gap. Each of the parties tends to walk on their own path. Their relation is only a business bond of purveyor and stakeholder. PHRI suggests a solution to overcome this matter. One of them is by involving the stakeholder in the curriculum design and in research for the development of the curriculum. The curriculum designers need to know the industrial requirements before they are planning to develop the curriculum. In the conclusion, PHRI remarked the need to conduct curriculum development that can accomodate the needs of the stakeholders. This can be a hint that needs analysis has not been a common practice in Indonesia.

One of the importance point of needs analysis is to 'bridge the gap' the assumption of the needs of the parties in the curriculum developments; the institution, the goverment, the stakeholders, as well as the learners. Lekatompessy (2010) gives examples of how the needs can be different:

- Learners' view: more support for learning needed and reduction of the amount of material they had to study
- Academic's view: better preparation for tertiary studies needed in terms of reading and writing skills

- Employers' view: better preparation for employment required in terms of basic communication skills
- Teachers' view: better grasp of grammar needed by learners

Needs are not objective facts but subjective, then the interpretation of information from a larger variety of sources, a great deal of consultation is needed with the various stakeholders to ensure that the conclusions drawn from a needs analysis are appropriate and relevant.

Now, let us take a look into the Indonesian Higher Education National Standards (*Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi*/SNPT). Paragraph 8 verse (2) item (a) stated that in formulating the minimum learning performance, a team of expertise, goverment, institution, and stakeholders should be formed. Unfortunately there is no statement related to learners' involvement, whereas learners is the main factor in needs analysis. As Hutchinson and Waters stated that the starting point for learning process is to know the learners' needs. Similarly, on paragraph 19 ver (1), (2), and (3), the development of the syllabus should be based on several things. Unfortunatelly, again, there is no information on the posisition of the students' needs, although in paragraph 23, it is stated that the learning process should motivate the students to learn. On the following paragraphs, learners are still put as an object rather than a partner in developing the curriculum.

There is no such clear statement related to the importance of the learners participation in the curriculum development. According to Lekatompessy (2010), the reluctantcy to joining students in the policy making is due to the in ablity of the learners to identify and define the language needs. It is the art of the teacher then to trigger the learners related to the needs. In a learner-centered curriculum, teachers' reconciliation in content selection though extensive consultation with the students about their learning needs and interest is critical. Therefore, needs analysis helps teachers create in-class activities in which the students can utilize learned skills and knowledge as tools to meet their real-life needs in meaningful ways. Needs analysis can helps teachers understand "local needs" of students or the needs of a particular group of students and make practical decision in pedagogy and assessment for improvement, and for the selection of appropriate teaching methods in a program. It has to bear in mind that needs analysis is a cyclical process that takes place prior to, during, and after courses have been taught. There is no reason, then, to eleminate the importance of understanding the learners needs.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum development deals with the continuous process of evaluating needs. Needs analysis is then become a crucial step in which the needs of all

parties being identified. Eventhough, the national curriculum has not been clearly stated the importance and procedures of needs analysis, as the practitioner in curriculum development and also as the one who determine the teaching learning policy, a lecturer should give special attention to needs analysis, especially in ESP class. The standard requirements stated by the national curriculum should be combined with the requirements of the target place (stakeholders) and the needs of the learners. The purpose is to develop a more meaningful and learning-centered learning. It would be better if there is a clear policy that encourage lecturers, reseachers, and curriculum developers to make use the needs analysis in desgining the curriculum. The policy may be beneficial in improving the study in needs analysis, especially in esp. Those studies may result various materials in esp course, such as books which concerning the needs of the Indonesian leaners and the local genius of Indonesian culture. Quoting Weimer (2010), it is important to remember that the purpose of a university education is not to produce a finished product. Rather, it is to produce a lifelong learner who will continue to seek out information as necessary and apply it to solve unforeseen problems. Learners should gain benefit from the learning in which they are actively involved in the decission making.

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