

Examining English Language Teaching (ELT) Syllabus at Hospitality Program: between the Theory and Practice

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Abstract: *This study aims to critically analyse the syllabus' content as well as identify whether it meets learning objectives or not. The suggestion of remedies will also be given to make learning appropriate and successful. As part of study, twenty English teachers from hospitality program were selected. A qualitative study in terms of document review was administered to critically analyse syllabus components (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2017). In addition, an interview session with a set of five questions based on the prior elements reflecting on the existing syllabus was also conducted with teachers to bring new insights on this study. The analysis of data revealed that the syllabus less appropriate and needs to be re-designed. It should include more activities concerning to the students' specific needs. Teacher's perception and experience influences their way of teaching and selecting materials. Teachers' exploitation on other resources is suggested in order to motivates and push students more*

Keywords: *English Language Teaching, syllabus, hospitality program, vocational schools, curriculum.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of vocational school curriculum is adjusted to the national curriculum guidelines. As part of curriculum, syllabus plays significant role in academic setting. It is defined as a framework for teaching that divides the content of learning into teachable elements and then sequence these into an effective order for teaching and learning (Richards, 2017, p. 35). Relates with classroom implementation, it becomes either as personal or professional document which reflects teachers' feeling, attitudes, and beliefs about subject matter being taught. From a syllabus, students will have information of what the subject is about, why the topic is learned, where it is going and what will be required for them to be successful in learning. Whether it is intended or not, the quality of syllabus becomes reliable indicator of the quality of teaching. This importance brings impact of its existence in meaningful EFL learning (Cowling, 2007: 440; Forniciari and Dean, 2014: 703; Savage, 2011: 56).

Need analysis process will be crucial consideration of selecting components in syllabus development. Some articles were published relating to these issues by Coniam (2003), Tai, et.al. (2015), Chan (2018). Those finding were varied, according to target learners as the central part of analysis. The concern of making English lesson more relevant to learners' need also led during the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: p. 10; Basturkmen, 2010: 19; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013: p. 133). ESP learners particularly learn English in order to carry a particular role, such as English-medium University, doctor, mechanic, hotelier, and so on. In hospitality program, learners' needs often described in terms of performance; that is what learners will be able to do with the language at the end of lesson (Basturkmen, 2010: 22). Whichever type of syllabus is chosen; the task, exercises and activities of different topics considered should represents such learning objectives. However, in reality, syllabus document existed in some ESP program do not neatly fall into specific categories, but draw on general points.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Syllabus

As syllabus is primary means to carry out learning phase in classroom, it is urgent to evaluate the content of syllabus periodically (time to time) to assure it meets learning objectives. Such evaluation will help to identify how learning objectives are successfully met and what elements that should be introduced to achieve better learning result. Theoretically, there are at least five elements involved in syllabus design: needs analysis, objectives, teaching or methodology, materials used, and testing or evaluation (Brown, 1995). Bearing in mind these important aspects of a syllabus design, the question arises then, may those aspects not meet the needs of students?. This present study evaluates the English subject syllabus for hospitality program in a vocational secondary school. The syllabus has certain objectives like, by the end of the lesson, students are expected to be able to:

...improve their skills in English, especially in a vocational context both in the school and the working field. For specific achievements or instructional objectives, students are expected to be able to have a good oral skill in order to be capable of communicating with people in schools, working areas, and when meeting foreigners.

Document analysis and interview methods are used to evaluate the syllabus content. Teachers were the main evaluators as they have practically used it in the classroom and are well familiar with its effectiveness. Although dozens of studies toward ELT materials' development have been reported, relatively few have examined about how syllabus is designed and its evaluation. Thus, this study focuses on critically analyzing syllabus' content, identify whether it meets the learning objectives or not and to give suggestion to improve content of ELT syllabus of hospitality program.

III. METHOD

This qualitative study utilizes in depth interview and document analysis. Seven from twenty English teachers from selected vocational schools were participated in this study. Their age ranges 26 to 43 years old. Their English teaching experience were varied between 2-15 years. Most participants' experience of teaching English at vocational hospitality program ranges from four to seven years. In depth interview was administered to gather the data from teachers aiming to measure how teachers' perceived and rated the current syllabus. Their suggestions and opinions were taken into research consideration. This study also obtained data from document analysis. The existing syllabus was analyzed based on some criteria such as needs analysis, objectives, language learning philosophy, methodology, and the materials used as mainly proposed by Brown (1995).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Need Analysis

Needs define as wants, desires, demands, motivation, lacks, constrains, and requirements (Brindley, 1984: 28 in Richards, 2017: 80). In language learning context, it relates to linguistic deficiency describing what student able to perform at present and what he or she should be able to do (Richards, 2001). The process of gathering, interpreting and making these needs information for a course decision called as need analysis or need assessment. Need analysis will consistently be used in syllabus analysis.

Considering students' need, majority ideas see the hospitality students' need as they are able to communicate fluently through English in relation with their future career in hotel. The students, themselves, however may see their goals to study English as concerned as providing communication skill for find a job (Fosters and Bol, 2018). The goals, which are mentioned consisting four core competencies (CC). Firstly, it stated that students have to realize and believe their religion they hold; secondly the students have to be honest, disciplined, responsible, caring (mutual cooperation, tolerance), polite, responsive and active behaviour and attitude as part of problem solution in social context; thirdly, students have to be able to understand, apply, analyze the factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge based on curiosity about science, technology, art, culture; and last it mentioned that students are able to analyze, give reason, evaluate and able to implement scientific method (high order thinking skills). Those fourth CC's elaborates clearly of religious, behavioral, social-cognitive aspect and high order thinking skills. Yet, those statement does not give clear reflection of students' needs. Since hospitality program deals with specific context, it is fairly agreed that CC's best reflects the students' competencies either as behavioral or cognitive aspects in relation to their mastery of English for hotel. In terms of carrying out a learners' need analysis, teachers felt that it was being a dilemma. On one hand, they wondering of conduct an analysis of students' need deals students' communicative competence on hospitality context.

However, on the other hand they have to convey materials upon a syllabus based on the National Examination target, since the students' competency will be measured from their national examination result. Regardless of this constrain, teachers have tried to provide supplementary materials related to students' competence. It was really become an obstacle considering that before assigning teaching materials, teachers have to design a syllabus as a framework.

Objectives

Objective is more specific statement of purpose prefers to define as instructional objectives which means specific statements that describe the particular skills, knowledge and behaviour that the learner will be expected to understand and perform at the end of lesson. It can be said that objectives are more specific than goals, and the specificity does not depend on the word length statements. The following are characteristics of objectives:

- a. Performance (what the learner will be able to do)
- b. Conditions (important conditions under which the performance is expected to occur)
- c. Criterion (the quality or level of performance that will be considered acceptable)

The objectives found in existing syllabus reflected in basic competence. Seen from the lists of objectives stated in each unit, the syllabus type tend to be text based syllabus; here are the statement of basic competence taken from the first unit:

1. Analyzing social functions, text and linguistic elements from the text of identity presentation, according to the context of its use.
2. Compile simple oral and written texts, to describe, ask questions, and respond to the presentation of identity, by paying attention to social functions, text structures, and linguistic elements, correctly and in context.

Instead of more focusing on reading skill, content part of syllabus only stated grammar and language-in-focus as content language elements. None of the basic competence showing of students' competence related to English for hotel. Due to ESP learning characteristics, it will be better if language content covers structure, grammar, vocabulary, and phonetic elements as well as the theme or interest topics which drawn on considerations of learners' need and social criteria.

Methodology

Teaching methodology reflects learning theory and the language learning theories used to refer to a classroom technique for activity. Existing syllabus dominated by facilitating students through scientific approach (SA). It is mentioned procedural phase of learning starting from observing, asking, exploring, associating and lastly communicating. Concerning the cognitive code used in syllabus, teaching methodology should be based on communication meaning and students' activity with the language. The teaching methodology is arranged centred on students' activeness. In process dimension, the syllabus only provide learners' task without stating how the role teacher and learners take on during the learning process. Finally, the expected outcomes of a course of study had been defined indeed. But, it is less specific directly related to ESP. It can be said that the aim and learning objectives are less appropriate suitably with learners' needs.

Teaching Materials

What distinguishes ESP and General English (GE) is the awareness of needs. This statement brings difference implementation on English learning in Senior High school and hospitality English; while the focus is on students' ability to communicate in relation with hospitality. However, it is found the similarity of material used in both context. The text book as the compulsory materials were similar which that used in senior high schools. The provided text book does not help learners comprehend and use ESP vocabularies. Even none of topics shows the relation of students' performance in using English at hotel. Almost 100% of topics relates to the students' mastery of General English. Due to learners' specific characteristics, this condition is not relevant. Ideally, the content of material should relate to their disciplines. English teachers assume that they have tried to be more creative in designing the supplementary material for students. Yet, developing supplementary material also needed an analysis of curriculum. Despite of efforts made by teachers, some of students are not able to demonstrate a good progress in hospitality program. The students still face some problems in taking phone calls, reservation and receiving guests. Both, teachers and students then have to develop common understanding on what activities should be used in a classroom and what skills they have to develop respectively. Provided ESP materials consist of three elements as (a) language content or specific matter to be included; (b) process or the manner in which language content is learned; (c) product or outcomes such as the language skills learners are expected to master. Attention to those three elements, of course, is absolutely crucial.

From the perspective of syllabus designing, the definition of syllabus is what should firstly be discussed. Based on the teachers' point of view, a syllabus was typically defined similarly to content standard, which was a topic

description of the available curriculum. These become an outline that a teacher brought in to classroom activities. However, in reality syllabus designed in ELT classroom of hospitality program was not relevant to students' majors. The reason was process of designing the basic competence is considered to be out of students' need analysis. In existing syllabus teaching aims elaborated into four aspects namely religious, behavior, social-cognitive and also high order thinking skills. Those aspect termed as core competence. Realizing that the materials outline did not fully satisfy students' needs in enrolling in their program, teachers seemed remain to follow the existing syllabus since the students' achievement of English subject was measured with the score of national Examination. It was problematic constrain. Thus, it was truly a dilemma for teachers as they should ideally concern with students' needs. Due to fulfill a relevant English, some teachers tried to insert materials outside that written in syllabus. This also indicated that the existing syllabus does not met students' need relates to English for hotel. As teaching framework, syllabus provides content material, its procedure, and in what order the material will be taught to achieve targeted learning outcomes.

Further, the lesson and activities students' need are that would introduce them to the language and terminology associated with the skills they would be expected to learn. As it is hospitality program, the ESP vocabulary (terminology) plays a very important role. Syllabus should include some more activities that address to the students' need. For English communication at hotel suggest the following tasks might be useful: taking phone calls, giving information, taking reservation, apologizing, and receiving guests. These kind of activities have to mention in syllabus, as it has at least exercises in developing these skills. Moreover, it has to be taken into consideration for other pedagogical issues. Considering local policy makers such the headmasters, school committee, teachers' community, language experts and stake holders to describe comprehensively of situation and need are crucial.

Syllabus designing reflects an area of establishing learning materials, especially English. Firstly, it appears on processes consisting of development, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation. In other words, the first reflection deals with aspect concerning with Who and How. Who and How establish the lesson. It connects with the development of program and closely related to what commonly said as curriculum. Here, the curriculum goes with the system of an instructional process. In this case, considering local policy makers such the headmasters, school committee, teachers' community, language experts and stake holders to describe comprehensively of situation and need are crucial. Second, concern with content standard (What) that, reflects the perspective of learners' needs analysis which seems showing a contrast in which the English syllabus was not designed based upon learners' needs analysis in program. Consequently, poor linguistic knowledge dominate the students' problem in ESP class and that could be a constraint of their English proficiency. ESP goes through this statement: "Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need". Thus, it is widely accepted that teaching English for specific professional purposes mean providing specific content and performance that were extremely required, as students prepared to be readily for doing certain jobs. An investigation of learners' needs before setting up the learning process are mainly required. Finally, that results would like to considerably involve as the fundamental aspect of providing appropriate English for learners.

V. CONCLUSION

The essential point that needs to be considered is that ELT syllabus, which was implemented in hospitality program not yet reflecting the students' needs. First, it indicated from the four core competence mentioned, it does not give clear reflection of students' needs. In hospitality program, the core competence best reflects the students competencies either as behavioral or cognitive aspects in relation to their proficient English for hotel. Secondly, the objectives which are reflected in basic competence belongs to to text- based syllabus and it gives description of each topic/ unit's objectives. It emphasizes more on students' reading skill with mentioning language content elements in description of grammar and language-in-focus. None of the basic competence showing of students' competence related to English for hotel. This should not be so, considering ESP learning characteristics, that language content of syllabus best covers structure, grammar, vocabulary and phonetic elements as well as the theme or interest topics which drawn on considerations of learners' need and social criteria (Richards, 2017). The third indicator, discussed about methodology, shows that the syllabus does not give explanation on how the role teacher and learners take on during the learning process. The expected learning outcomes had been defined, though is less specific directly related to ESP. Lastly, the text book as the compulsory materials used were similar which that used in senior high schools. The provided textbook does not help learners comprehend and use ESP vocabularies. Even none of topics shows the relation of students' performance in using English for hotel. Almost 80% of topics relates to the students' mastery of General English. This condition is not relevant because there is no differentiation of hospitality program which in the area of ESP, and English taught in Senior high school as GE. Even though, English teachers have tried to be creatively

design additional material, but an evaluation and some remedies will be needed to overcome inaccuracies of syllabus. As a framework of learning implementation, syllabus accuracy to learners' specific needs will provide an appropriate English classroom for students at hospitality program.

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