

English for occupational purposes (EOP): A case study of the English syllabus for the economic education program

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Abstract: *syllabus designing of the English language teaching becomes one of key factors determining the results of teaching. Moreover, the presence of English syllabus in the realm of English for occupational purposes (EOP) at the university level should play a prominent role to maximize students' achievement of language learning programs in fulfilling their needs of becoming professional figures in their own field of study. This study was intended to analyze, criticize and evaluate the syllabus design of the English for Business course for the Economy Education Department, STKIP PGRI Nganjuk, East Java. The study explored a case that presents a certain situation thus a qualitative case study was employed. A structured interview and documents were obtained as data collection instrumentation in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the case. The findings indicate that the process of designing the syllabus has missed some essential parts including needs analysis which is a key factor of developing English for specific purposes (ESP) syllabus. In addition, the type of the syllabus remained unspecific since the content did not meet the criterias of syllabus types as being discussed by the experts. Strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus were also discussed. The findings are suggested to the university and syllabus developers to evaluate the process of syllabus designing and the content of the syllabus to maximize the course goals. Wider investigation of the phenomenon of syllabus development in the realm of ESP is also suggested.*

INTRODUCTION

It has been widely recognized that English plays as an International language (EIL) and as a lingua franca (ELF). In Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language (EFL) and should be taught in several educational levels including university level. Regarding the international role and the important role of the English language, teaching and learning English should be matched and linked with appropriate pedagogical approach since the success of English language teaching is hardly required. Hence, achieving success in English language teaching is not only based on the teacher, method, curriculum but also other aspects such as syllabus. The development of syllabus is an important decision in English language teaching in order to decide what to be taught and in what order.

Syllabus describes learning objectives to be carried out and provides what is to be taught and skills to be mastered for learners to attain. Krahnke (1987) maintains that the syllabus developed facilitates learners to meet their objectives by providing material of the

course. On the other hand, what language learners learn as a result of teaching becomes the main focus of the syllabus product (Nunan, 2005). Syllabus also refers to description of course content including what is to be taught and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be improved, together with specific objectives stage (Dhankar, 2006). Therefore, it can be concluded that syllabus is a collection of topics on the same subject matter that are required to meet course objectives within a given time and as the means to evaluate course outcomes.

Syllabus designing of the English language course is a key factor that plays a prominent role to attain English proficiency. It becomes one of crucial points in the educational field to interact and recognize materials for both teachers and students (Joy, 2013). Syllabus is also considered as a very crucial factor determining a result of teaching (Nunan, 2005). Reflection of language and linguistic performance is described and presented briefly by syllabus design (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The statement before indicates the importance of syllabus to guide teachers what to teach and how to teach and to guide students what to learn and how to learn inside a language program so that both can maximize achievement of language learning program.

Finally, through this paper, it is hardly important to analyze English course syllabus design at the university level, especially English for Specific Purposes (ESP) designed for university students. University students are prepared to be a professional figure in their own field of study. Therefore, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) should be implemented to proceed with the domain specifications of the job. They are also trained to open a lot of new career opportunities. English is very important as it broadens their minds and improves their life quality by providing job opportunities. English is also widely used in the literature, media section, job requirements, etc. Mastering the English language is a great value-add whether students want to pursue an education, a future profession, making cooperation, or simply being accepted into society. It is really important to evaluate and influence the syllabus of EOP particularly for the teaching and learning activity so that students can master the English language well in order to achieve their future needs.

Objectives of the study should be decided in order to provide valuable and meaningful analysis and information of the syllabus. The research objectives of the study are: a) To know the process of designing the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department; b) To analyze the syllabus design of English for Business for the Economy Education Department; c) To analyze strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

English Syllabus

According to Krahnke (1987), language teaching has six types of teaching syllabus including: structural (or formal) syllabus, notional/functional syllabus, situational syllabus, skill-based syllabus, task-based syllabus, content-based syllabus. Structural syllabus is one that consists of a selected list about grammar objects in terms of simplicity and complexity (Wilkins, 1976; Nunan, 1998). Notional syllabus is one that consists of conceptual meaning (Nunan, 1998) or categories of meaning and concepts (Wilkins, 1976). It is characterized by the composition of authentic language use and semantic base. Situational syllabus is one which focuses on real or imaginary situations in which language occurs. Skill-based syllabus aims at learning specific language skills and developing more general competence in the language. Task-based syllabus is one where the content consists of a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students need to perform in order to develop language ability (Krahnke, 1987). Content-based syllabus is designed to teach contents or

information using the language that the students are also learning (Richard & Rodgers, 2001).

Based on those norms, the development of syllabus in language teaching should consider theory of language, theory of learning and the learner type. Theory of language explicitly or implicitly underlies selection of topics or materials order. Theory of learning determines approach, method, and techniques in teaching as well as pedagogical, andragogical or heutagogical approach in classroom activities. Learner types can be defined as types of how learners learn language including cognitive activity, life style, aspirations, employment, educational and social background, etc. (Krahnke, 1987).

Needs Analysis (NA)

Concurrent with the upsurge of interest in BE has been the development of the idea of need analysis. ESP researchers lay emphasis on need analysis which has existed in the world of language education for two or three decades. ESP researchers have been offering emphasis on needs analysis in the world of language education for two or three decades. The development of Business English (BE) is a part of the idea of needs analysis. Needs analysis has been widely used in education, economy, manufacturing, service, etc. as methods in research needs obtaining introspect, interview, observation, questionnaire, etc. for the data collection (Chen, 2009). It can be used to identify learners' needs, weaknesses of students' achievement, in-service needs, areas for expenditure and educational development (Cohen et al., 2000).

Following the general theoretical framework of ESP, BE is considered under the umbrella of ESP which one of the most crucial parts is the needs analysis. It is the starting point that affects proper application of the course design because educators do not only collect factual information but also gather information related to learners' needs, wants, and interests. It is a fundamental stage of learner-centered curriculum design (Chunling, 2014).

NA has three main purposes as described by Nunan (1988), including its importance as the first step of curriculum development since it becomes a key source of the future decisions to be made related to objectives, students placement, specification of the course content and methodology; it's role to obtain wider input into the implementation of language program; and it's importance to improve curricula by providing data of the existing program to be reviewed and evaluated.

On the other hand, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divide needs into target needs and learning needs. Target needs refer to skills and knowledge to be mastered in target situations including necessities, want, and lack. Necessities mean what learners need to know about the target situation. Wants refer to the requirements of the target situation and lack can be identified as the gap between learners' prior knowledge and the necessities. Whereas, learning needs refer to what learners should do to master knowledge, skills, strategies in target language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Therefore, needs analysis is very important in English language teaching, especially ESP course design as the preliminary step to determine course goals and content which are closely connected to important places in the curriculum. It is a powerful tool to clarify and validate true needs thus it may help educators develop effective syllabus and shape the curriculum development based on learners' communication needs, wants, and interests (Lapetit & Cichocky, 2005).

METHOD

The research used a case study research design intended to unpack the syllabus design of English for Business course for the Economy Education Department, STKIP PGRI Nganjuk, East Java. Creswell (2007) stated that case study is a research which involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. Specifically, the research employed intrinsic case study since it focuses on the case itself because the case presents a unique situation. Case study engages multiple forms of data collection including interviews, observations, documents, audiovisual materials, participant-observations to develop an in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2007). In this research, interviews and documents were selected as instruments of data collection. Structured interview was conducted with the head of the English Education Department of the university as well as the developer of the syllabus. The documents observed in the study were the primary sources. Merriam (1998) stated that primary source documents are those in which the originator of the document is recounting firsthand experience with the phenomenon of interest. The documents collected and observed were the syllabus of the English for Business course program of the Economy Education Department, STKIP PGRI Nganjuk and the document of higher education curriculum arrangement for the English Education Department study program.

After collecting the data, the researchers used qualitative content analysis to analyze the data. Content analysis is a systematic procedure for describing the content of communication (Merriam, 1998) and for looking for insights in which situation, setting, styles, images, meanings and nuances are key topics (Altheide, 1987). Specifically, based on three approaches to qualitative content analysis, the research used directed content analysis since the purpose was to validate or extend a conceptual framework or theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The process of conducting qualitative content analysis followed the qualitative content analysis framework of Zhang and Wildermuth (2005). The steps are described as follows: 1) preparing the data (familiarizing documents and transcribing interview); 2) defining the unit of analysis (basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis); 3) developing categories and a coding structure; 4) Testing coding scheme on a sample of text; 5) coding all the text; 6) assessing coding consistency; 7) drawing conclusions from the coded data; 8) reporting research findings.

This research was conducted in the Economy Education Department of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk especially in the English for Business course. The syllabus was designed by a lecturer of the English Education Department. The students were low proficiency English learners. The syllabus designer was a lecturer as well as the head of the English Education Department program. Therefore, besides designing the syllabus, she was also the leader of the syllabus developer team. STKIP PGRI Nganjuk is located in Nganjuk, East Java. The university was accredited B by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Specifically, the English Language Education Department, the initiator of English syllabus for other departments, got B accreditation by Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The process of designing the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department

A structured interview was conducted with the head of the English Education Department as the designer or developer of the syllabus analyzed. Based on the results of the structured interview, the English syllabus for all departments in the university should be designed by the team of syllabi developers from the English Education Department. The team was led by the head and secretary of the department, while all faculty members

became the members. The decision of such syllabi should be discussed in a meeting of the syllabi developers team.

In developing the syllabus, instrumentation is needed to design a valid, reliable and practical syllabus thus can create a meaningful teaching and learning process as well as can gain maximization of learning goals achievement. In this realm, a document of curriculum development for higher education from PDDIKTI was used as a guidance to design the syllabus. In addition, the template of the existing syllabus was standardized by UPM (*Unit Penjaminan Mutu*) and then was legalized by the first deputy of the head of university to be implemented by the syllabus developers of each study program.

In the process of designing the syllabus, the developer who was the head of the department as well as the leader of syllabi development in the study program did not do needs analysis or needs assessment. The consideration was because the syllabus developer followed instrumentation of a document of curriculum development for higher education from PDDIKTI which was considered as complete criteria to design syllabi, including the syllabus analyzed. After that, the syllabus designed should be given over to assessors to receive some feedback. Thus, suggestions from assessors, stakeholders (alumni, Senior High School teachers, *Dinas Pendidikan*) will be accumulated to do frequent observation and evaluation to refine the syllabus. In certain cases, if it is needed, frequent observation and evaluation should be done by all syllabi developer members to decide a meaningful conclusion and solution.

After explaining the process of designing the syllabus of English for Business for Economy Education Department students, the writers would like to deliver the results of analysis based on the theoretical framework of essential parts of syllabus designing described by Nation and Macalister (2010). Nation and Macalister (2010) describe components of syllabus designing, those are: 1) considering/following the environment to include appropriate content; 2) discovering/knowning needs to provide contents must be addressed and what would be an appropriate way to implement it; 3) following/considering principles or ideas presented by researchers in various areas of language to develop priorities for teaching and assessment; 4) knowing the learners' goals or exit level outcomes; 5) considering content to be implied and the sequence to be presented; 6) presenting appropriate format/procedure and presenting materials; 7) assessing and monitoring students' language competence that they have achieved after completing a particular unit or topic; 8) doing evaluation.

The analysis shows that the students were not involved in the process of developing the syllabus since the suggestion as a determiner to evaluate or to refine the syllabus came from assessors and stakeholders. Students involvement in the process of designing syllabus makes the course more appropriate for learners' needs, encourages students, and increases their self-confidence, motivation, and attitudes, develops learner-centeredness and fosters autonomy (Pakdaman et al., 2021). Belinda (2017) asserts that a good, precise and effective syllabus should be designed based on students' needs. However, the absence of students' involvement may also lead to the unavailability to obtain in-depth understanding of their language proficiency, lack, needs and wants as one of things to be considered before designing the syllabus as necessities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) thus impact on less appropriateness course content and affect on students motivation in learning. Since it is very important to incorporate the syllabus and cultural aspect (Fareen, 2017), the absence of cultural elements incorporation to prepare learning materials and activities that are compatible to students' needs based on their linguistic features may also lead to less maximization of students' learning.

In addition, the process of designing the syllabus has missed some important steps or components of essential parts of syllabus designing (Nation & Macalister, 2010). The process has jumped into almost the latest step which is presenting an appropriate format or template from the standardized template legalized by the university as well as following the instrumentation of PDDIKTI. There are some essential steps missed including first up to fifth step that may also be linked into the needs analysis framework of West (1994) which include types of language needs analysis in terms of means analysis (learning situation in terms of practicality and cultural appropriateness), target situation analysis (information of the language requirements), learning oriented analysis (the needs in terms of syllabus, content, teaching methods, materials, etc.) and deficiency analysis (learners wants and needs). However, there should be evaluation after receiving feedback or suggestions from assessors and stakeholders.

To shed light with the analysis above, syllabus designer unavailability to consider learning environment, students' language needs, content appropriateness related to business workplace, and students goals of learning language can impact several things. First, any content contrary to the environment can create unrest for the students. Second, having no sequence or organization of contents provides unsatisfactory results for the learners and negatively impacts their overall performance (Zahid & Shafqat, 2022).

Type of the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department

Syllabus as one of the educational substances is the main guideline for teachers in carrying out learning in schools. There are several kinds of components addressed in the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department of one private university in Nganjuk, East Java started from Capaian Pembelajaran (CP), CPL-PRODI charged to MK, Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), and final ability of each learning stage (Sub-CPMK). The topics were arranged in different kinds of material. In Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK) there are 7 stages of CPMK-1 to CPMK-7 those are students are able to understand and apply English competence, students are able to understand and apply English essay, students are able to understand and apply basic English conversations, students are able to understand and apply vocabulary, students are able to understand and apply pronunciation appropriately, students are able to understand and apply public speaking, students are able to understand and solve TOEFL questions.

In addition, the final ability of each learning stage (Sub-CPMK) were arranged into 14 topics of materials started from Sub-CPMK1 to Sub-CPMK14 those are Students are able to understand and apply foreign language orientation (English), Students are able to understand and apply Comparison, Students are able to understand and apply Asking prices, Students are able to understand and apply Negotiating, Students are able to understand and apply Gerunds, Students are able to understand and apply Passive Voice, Students are able to understand and apply How to talk about abilities, Students are able to understand and apply the TOEFL Mini Test, Students are able to understand and apply the TOEFL Mini Test, Students are able to understand and apply Conditional Sentences, Students are able to understand and apply Entrepreneurship Texts, Students are able to understand and apply Relative Clause, Students are able to understand and apply Asking and Giving Directions, Students are able to understand and apply Noun Clause.

Furthermore, all the topics of the materials provided in the syllabus are mixed. The topics of the material match with the learning outcomes but they are not connected with the name of the course which mentions business as the focus. It can be categorized as content related text rather than authentic text. The syllabus is designed for the business

students but the content is not fully related to business material. The materials provided are still mixed and general. However, if the syllabus is designed as English for business the content should be authentic text and related to business materials such as Students are able to understand and apply graphic text, lobbying, receipt, agreement etc. Therefore, it can be concluded that the type of syllabus is not clear since the syllabus does not meet any criteria of types of syllabus whether occur independently or combine two or more syllabus.

The findings against the previous studies that the EOP syllabus should focus on developing English language skills related to the working milieu of certain occupations (Kim, 2008) and the learning activities should be designed within the framework of professionalism in the world of work (Kalpana & Sankar, 2017).

Strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus of English for Business for the Economy Education Department

In this session, the writers would like to discuss the strengthS of the syllabus of the Economy Education Department of one private university in Nganjuk, East Java designed by a faculty member of the English Education Department. The syllabus provides content related materials in the field of business English. The structure of reading materials presented are as follows: monopoly, asking price, negotiating, capitalism versus socialism, business ethics, inflation, entrepreneurship, and labor and capital.

On the other hand, after discussing the strengths, this next session would like to discuss the weaknesses of the syllabus in-depth. The first discussion is related to CPMK (*Capaian Pembelajaran Mata Kuliah*) and the sub-CPMK. In this component, it is clearly mentioned that the course learning outcomes (CLO) are generated into the same terms for all CLO which are understanding and applying certain topics, even the last mentioned use term of finishing TOEFL exercises. Therefore, it can be inferred that the CLO should be considered as too general or less specific CLO since it does not mention specification of essay, conversation, vocabulary etc. related to materials authenticity in the field of business English. Moreover, connecting to the course designed for economy students in the realm of business English, the syllabus can be considered as less compatible to the course which is ESP.

Second is related to a short description of the course (*deskripsi singkat mata kuliah*). It is written that the course is intended to learn basic English, English communication, complex and compound sentences as the students are hoping to master four English competencies, those are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hence, if this should be connected to the overall content of the course, this description is not completely covering the course in general since not all English competences are addressed and materials presented do not match to the existing materials written in the syllabus. Reading becomes the only one English competence addressed in the syllabus while the others are not. It is proven by the teaching and learning activities as well as the chosen materials that involve the students into reading activity. Moreover, the materials presented in the description only covers several certain topics thus it does not completely explain overall materials in brief.

Third, the syllabus provides the same teaching methods, activities, techniques, and assessment. Addressing various sub-CPMK, indicators and materials, the syllabus presents a less specific class activities. The whole activities except TOEFL test are in terms of composing a resume, composing questions, answering questions, proactive participation, discussing problems and having a review. It can also be inferred that the class activities are not able to meet the learning objectives as it is too general and does not match. As an example, let's have a look into 5th topic which the CPMK is understanding gerund in

English. However, the materials presented do not match the CPMK since the materials also include talking about ability or asking/helping/expressing gratitude. If it is connected to the learning activities, the learning activities do not facilitate the students to fulfill the understanding or mastery of the materials above.

On the other hand, it is even mentioned that the syllabus adopted the CEFR framework to decide assessments, hence the syllabus does not clearly define the CEFR illustrative descriptor scales and its link to the CPMK, activities and materials. The syllabus only defines that C5, A2, and P5 scales are adopted to all class activities and materials thus making the assessment criteria seem less authentic since every topic has different CPMK, class activities and materials.

Furthermore, there is less specific information of the developed skills and teaching media/resources. The syllabus mentions in the short description of the course that the course facilitates students to master four English competences which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Hence, in the syllabus content, it is not clearly explained what skills to be developed in a certain topic and it seems that reading is the only one skill to be developed if it is linked into learning activities and materials presented in a form of texts. Moreover, even all materials are content related to business English, hence all are in the form of texts and there are no certain references of resources to be used.

In addition, there is an unclear course category (GE/EAP/EOP) and kind of syllabus design. English for business should be an ESP course design since the course is addressed to economy students. Even the assessment tends to be English for Academic Purposes (EAP) since it is in the form of TOEFL test, hence the syllabus designer provides ESP resources in the outline. The materials presented are also various thus it is difficult to categorize the kind of course category either general English (GE), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), for instance the materials varied from texts, grammar, certain situational circumstances (e.g. asking and giving direction, inviting someone, etc.). This phenomenon also sheds light into integration of criterias of different kinds of syllabus thus it is also difficult to recognize the flow and the kind of syllabus.

Finally, Less understandable and readable assessments, scoring criteria or scoring rubric and weight of scoring become another weakness of the syllabus. The last column of the table presents the weight of scoring. Hence the accumulation of all percentages is less readable since there is no clear explanation of how such a decision was made as well as the accumulation of the percentage and weight of scoring percentage from other aspects. Moreover, related to the assessment, they are less authentic since it is only written what CEFR scales are adopted without presenting specific kinds of assessment to certain topics or skills and the way to assess the students. The findings are contradictory with Wirawan (2019) who maintains that the English syllabus designed based on ESP should include the teaching topics within the students' needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the process of designing the syllabus missed some essential parts of syllabus design, especially the absence of needs analysis as the crucial steps before designing the syllabus. The absence of needs analysis causes inability to obtain an in-depth overview related to learners' language proficiency and learners' target language needs, language requirements of business workplaces, and appropriateness of syllabus composition in the realm of compatibility of teaching methods and authentic assessments, and materials. And therefore, the syllabus composition is quite general thus learning

objectives or course learning outcomes do not meet certain goals of GE, EAP, EOP or other approaches in the field of English language teaching. As a result, no specific kind of syllabus can be decided and described since it does not match any kind of syllabus proposed by Krahnke (1987). Undefined and unspecified syllabus also cause less compatible materials and less authentic assessment and so do other components of the syllabus can not integrate smoothly and sometimes several components are a little bit contradictory.

The syllabus has strengths and also weaknesses. Strength point of the syllabus is placed in the content related materials presented to the students. Furthermore, the syllabus also has some weaknesses including: a) less specific course learning outcomes; b) short description of the course does not cover the content of the syllabus; c) providing the same teaching methods, activities, techniques, and assessment that remain less authentic; d) less specific information of the developed skills and teaching medias/resources; e) unclear course category (GE/EAP/EOP) and kind of syllabus design; and f) less understandable and readable assessments, scoring rubric and weight of scoring.

Finally, it is suggested that either the university and syllabus developers can make use of the benefits of this study to evaluate the policy and process of designing the syllabus in order to refine the existing syllabus, to improve teaching-learning process quality and to maximize learning goals achievement since the appropriate syllabus and lesson plan are tools to improve the effectiveness of learning (Margunayasa, 2018). Moreover, it is also suggested for other researchers to conduct wider investigation related to English syllabus in order to obtain more in-depth and broader understanding of the phenomenon of syllabus development of certain level of education so that will provide information of the quality of educators and will be beneficial for policy makers to facilitate them to be more professional thus can also improve the quality of education.

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