

## **Guidelines for Developing an Appropriate General English Material for Higher Students: A Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

English lesson is one of compulsory subject in the first semester of higher students that only two credits for sixteen meetings including midterm and final test. In the other hand most of the teacher are bound by a mandated curriculum defining the content, skills and values to be taught. Whether expected at school or state level, a curriculum outlines the goals and objectives for the students and the course of study.

The study is expected to give a valuable contribution and improvement of the English teaching at the research site in designing an appropriate materials for higher students.

Keywords: English teaching, higher students, materials.

### **Introduction**

English lesson is one of compulsory subject in the first semester of higher students that only two credits for sixteen meetings including midterm and final test. Quite hard to give the materials in limited time with high expectations that students should achieve. Some of the problems occur in the classroom are competency of the students' are still in the low level, they cannot understand English fluently, the syllabus is not relevant with the needs of workforce, less of learning equipment, limited time allotment in teaching English. Another problem is the society, lots of students still using their own mother tongue for communicate even they were studying English in the classroom and less of relevant textbooks or reference that related with used by the teacher. It is not normally used as a language of instruction in education, or as a language of communication in their societal

functions (e.g. business or government) within the non-English-speaking countries, such as, Thailand, Japan, China, Russia, German, and Indonesia (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992).

In the other hand most of the teacher are bound by a mandated curriculum defining the content, skills and values to be taught. Whether expected at school or state level, a curriculum outlines the goals and objectives for the students and the course of study. Whatever the curriculum, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the goals and objectives of the overarching curriculum are kept close at hand when designing materials (Nunan, 1988). The curriculum and the context are variables that will significantly impact on decisions about teaching materials. There will be some benefits or no benefit at all of having their own materials that teacher design, because the teacher know well about the atmospheres that actually happen in the classroom and the students conditions. Brown (1995), for instance, points out that in language curriculum development, NA serves the purposes of 1) providing a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design and implementation of a language program by involving such people as learners, teachers, administrators and employers in the planning process, 2) identifying general or specific language needs which could be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content for a language program and 3) providing data that could serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluating an existing program.

In order to gain students interest and more fun learning activities an innovative learning materials should be conducted not only based on text book, nowadays lots of sources from youtube, kahoot, duolingo. Teachers have to create or found a diverse range of materials to support their teaching and their students' learning, most teachers were spending much time in selecting, evaluating, adapting and making materials to use in their teaching. Sometimes teacher only making comparison between other textbooks or from other teachers. Based on the problems and teacher perspectives, here teacher have to develop a guidelines appropriate materials for higher students.

## Materials

Materials is very crucial in language teaching in learning. As Richards (2001a) stated:

Teaching materials are a key component in most language programs. Whether the teacher uses a textbook, institutionally-prepared materials, or his or her own materials, instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. In the case of inexperienced teachers, materials may also serve as a form of teacher training – they provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons. (Richards, 2001a:251)

Contextualized and authentic teaching materials that stated above have been defined in different ways throughout the literature. Nunan (1989, as cited in Adams, 1995) states that authentic materials are not always produced for the purpose of language teaching. Little et al. (1988, as cited in Guariento & Morley, 2001) declare that authentic materials are used for some social purposes in the language context where they are produced. Materials can be in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-ROM, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard or anything which presents or informs about the language being learned (Tomlinson, 1998:xi). Further, Tomlinson (2001) states that materials mean anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language (linguistic, visual, auditory or kinesthetic). From Howard and Major (2004) in their paper present ten guidelines for designing effective English teaching materials:

1. English language teaching materials should be contextualized.

Materials should also be contextualized to the experiences, realities and first languages of the learners.

2. Materials should stimulate interaction and be generative in terms of language.

Ideally, language-teaching materials should provide situations that demand the same; situations where learners need to interact with each other regularly in a manner that reflects the type of interactions they will engage in outside of the classroom.

3. English language teaching materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills and strategies.

In addition to teaching valuable new language skills, it is essential that language teaching materials also teach their target learners how to learn, and that they help them to take advantage of language learning opportunities outside the classroom.

4. English language teaching materials should allow for a focus on form as well as function.

Well-designed materials can help considerably with this by alerting learners to underlying forms and by providing opportunities for regulated practice in addition to independent and creative expression.

5. English language teaching materials should offer opportunities for integrated language use.

Ideally, materials produced should give learners opportunities to integrate all the language skills in an authentic manner and to become competent at integrating extra-linguistic factors also.

6. English language teaching materials should be authentic.

Materials designers should also aim for authentic spoken and visual texts. Learners need to hear, see and read the way native speakers communicate with each other naturally.

7. English language teaching materials should link to each other to develop a progression of skills, understandings and language items.

The objectives at the outset of the design process will help ensure that the resultant materials have coherence, and that they clearly progress specific learning goals while also giving opportunities for repetition and reinforcement of earlier learning.

8. English language teaching materials should be attractive.

Criteria for evaluating English language teaching materials and course books frequently include reference to the 'look' and the 'feel' of the product (see, for example, Harmer, 1998; Nunan, 1991).

9. English language teaching materials should have appropriate instructions.

From Jolly & Bolitho (1998, p. 93), It seems to be stating the obvious to say that instructions should be clear, but, often, excellent materials fail in their "pedagogical realisation" because of a lack of clarity in their instructions.

10. English language teaching materials should be flexible.

This final guideline is directed primarily at longer series of materials rather than at one-off tasks, but has pertinence to both.

Based on the ten guidelines explained, materials are the crucial things in having effective ways of teaching not only for higher students but also for all students' levels. That start from real context so the students able to use the materials given in their real life situation, the materials should be related and continued between one to others and teachers had full policy in making and arranging the suitable materials for their students.

### **Need Analysis**

Richards (2001) claims that: "procedures used to collect information about learner's needs are known as needs analysis." (2001:51), he also claimed that: "Different types of students have different language needs and what they are taught should be restricted to what they need". A needs analysis is a means of defining as precisely as possible the learners' language needs and understanding what they think they can obtain from the language course. Needs analysis is the necessary point of departure for designing a syllabus, task and materials. As Brindley, the term needs is sometimes used to refer to wants, desires, demands, expectations, motivations, lacks, constraints, and requirements. (1984), quoted in Richards (2001) With its concern to fine tune the curriculum to the specific needs of the learner, needs analysis was a precursor to subsequent interest in 'learner centeredness' (Nunan, 1988; Tudor, 1996). Richards et al (1992) described as: The process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities ... [it] makes us of both subjective and objective information

It serves (at least) two purposes:

- 1) It gives the teacher more of an idea about how to adapt the course to the learner, rather than the learner having to adapt to the course.
- 2) It helps the learner become more aware of his/her role in the learning process.

Another from Widdowson (1981, p. 2) states that needs can refer to students "study or job requirements; in other words, what they have to be able to do at the end of

their language course. Needs in this sense perhaps can more appropriately be described as “objectives” (Berwick, 1989, P. 57).

Need analysis, also known as needs assessment (Schmidt, 1981), is an essential component for the language learning process. It helps instructors and syllabus designers in shaping the development of materials for effective language learning (Long, 2005). Richards (2001), has described some potential purposes to needs analysis: To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales managers, tour guides, or university students. To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students. To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do. The information obtained can then serve as a basis for planning a training program.

The explanation point out some perspective in developing an appropriate materials, need analysis was necessities for the goals, objectives, and content in a language program in order to develop students’ wants and lacks.

## **Conclusion**

Need analysis and materials were two important thing before the teachers develop their materials. The aspects of contributions from the perspectives of researchers, first is practical contribution to study in finding an appropriate general English materials that relevant for higher students. The second is its theoretical contribution to practice in teaching and learning process and the third is its contribution to teacher’s development. The study is expected to give a valuable contribution and improvement of the English teaching at the research site in designing an appropriate materials for higher students.

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