A STUDY ON STUDENTS' NEED ANALYSIS ON WEB-BASED ENGLISH LEARNING MATERIALS

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Abstract*: The objective of the research was to investigate the needs of students' analysis in using web-based English learning materials at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. The research focused on the students' professional needs, their difficulties of English learning materials while studying, their language skills and tasks, preferred learning styles and teaching methods, and the suggestions for better English learning strategies. This research was used a descriptive analytical approach in order to find the research goals. The data collection used was questionnaire. The research had comprised samples of 50 students randomly from many programs at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. The participants were both males and females. The research findings revealed that students need to learn English primarily by using web-based English learning materials. Their difficulties in studying could be solved. Furthermore, the research results indicated that the students were at the beginner level. They wanted to have various learning topics in learning English using website such as the topics related to daily life, science and technology and about teenagers' life. In learning activities for four skills the students preferred to practice the dialogue in pairs for speaking skill, complete jumble sentences for writing skill, identify key word of the monolog or dialogue for listening, listen to music for vocabulary learning activities and identify grammar error in sentences and write sentences or paragraphs based on the grammar that ever learnt for grammar learning activities.*

Keywords: *needs analysis, web-based English learning materials, learning activities.*

1. Introduction

Most students at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis face the same problems with other students from other university. Students have many difficulties while studying English. To solve these problems, it needs an analysis in order to find the basic problems of learning English. Students are able to understand what they need, what their difficulties in learning English and what their

suggestions in solving their problems. Mehmet (2015) stated that needs analysis is an important means of conducting research prior to designing and evaluating lessons/materials/syllabus and it helps draw a profile of students/course in order to determine and prioritize the needs for which students require English (Richards et al: 1992). However, in this study bearing in mind the second assumption of Seedhouse's (1995) that indicates General English (GE) learners' needs cannot be determined, we aim to focus on students need of web-based English learning materials in our research question is: What are the needs and expectations of students with regard by using Web-based English learning materials?

Suad (2015) said that a need analysis is related to the notional functional approach with the purpose to achieve the following goals, to understand the main notions while communication and to be able to use language as a functional issue while requesting, telling, describing, enumerating, explaining, etc. (Yalden, 2012). Overall, a need analysis is very

effective in evaluating students' needs in relation of English for the academic, specific, and general purposes.

2. Literature Review

2. 1. Needs Analysis

Need analysis (NA) is defined by Graves as "Needs to be understood as something that teachers can see and do as part of teaching" (Hedgcook and Ferris, 2009: 118). The developer will analyze what are the student's needs and what kind of appropriate teaching and learning materials will be taught to the students. So that, it is important to identify and analyze the target needs and the learning needs. Furthermore, need analysis also has been defined by a number of schools and understanding of these definitions is helpful in the further analysis of the topic under consideration. Overall, need analysis is defined as a specific ground for future development of the academic activities of a particular group of students. Apart from the definitions mentioned above in the introduction part, this notion has a number of other definitions, where the scholars try to present their own vision

of the issue. Focusing on language related needs in terms of language programs, the explanation of the needs analysis is based on curriculum development (Bosher&Smalkowski, 2012; Chaudron et al: 2005).

a. Target Needs

The analysis of the target needs is in terms of necessities, wants, and lacks. Nation and Macalister (2010: 25) explain briefly that necessities fit into required knowledge, lacks relate to present knowledge, and wants fit into subjective needs.

2.2. Necessities

The necessities are 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, 1990: 55). They propose an illustration, a businessman or woman might need to understand business letters, to communicative effectively at sales conferences, to get necessary information from sales catalogues – or Islamic boarding school students need to learn vocabulary that relates to Islamic contexts in order can communicate effectively. Hutchinson

& Waters also note that person who wants to be a businessman need to know the linguistics features such as discoursal, structural, lexical which commonly used in the situations identified. Munbay (1978) cited in Hutchinson & Waters (1990: 55) provided an example for a learner who works as a head waiter in a hotel.

2.3. Lacks

To identify the learners' lacks, it is important to know what the level of knowledge of the learners already so that teachers can decide to the necessities of the learners' lacks. Hutchinson, Waters and Breen state that the gap between target proficiency and existing proficiency of the learners can be referred to the learners' lacks (Hutchinson and Waters 1990: 56).

Nation and Macalister (2010:29) gave an example how to know the students' lacks. The way of investigating the lacks of the students are to look the part of the writing process or focus on an assignment task. Nation and Macalister state that the teachers or materials developers can interview them and give tests to them such as vocabulary test, grammar

tests, writing tests, and comprehension tests, or we can get them to do self-assessment using a specially prepared checklist, for instance TOEFL and IELTS tests.

2.4.Wants

Nation and Macalister (2010) elaborate related to student's wants or subjective needs in terms of what do the learners wish to learn. Karl Jensen, Li Yu Zhen, and Jose Lima cases are the example of wants. They had some needs but they choose one of the priorities according to their wish and wants. Wants is what the students or learners want to learn and it can not be neglected. In order to be motivated for their study, the materials should be suitable with the learners' wants.

b. Learning Needs

To know what is meant by learning needs, material developers should identify the learning situation of the learners, such as the language items and skills, activities, learning situations (setting), techniques, strategies, and approaches in teaching, teacher needs, and learner needs. Hutchinson and Waters (1990: 61) provide an imaginative example, James B. Herbolich's box kite project

(1979), of a focus on the learning situation. Herbolich describes a schema how to build a box kite and write a manual explaining how to construct it for engineering students at the University of Kuwait.

There are several ways or procedures in collecting information of the learning needs, such as interview, observation, documentary study, meetings, task analysis, collecting learner language samples, case study, and questionnaire. The interview is conducted to teachers who have got experiences in teaching. On going observation is needed to identify the learner needs, analyze ongoing of the learner process in order to teachers are able to identify the characters of the learners.

2.5.Importance of Need Analysis:

Need Analysis is a useful tool to understand students' needs and to help the implementation of educational policies. Nunan (1988) claims that information got through NA can serve the following purposes:

a) NA can set the goals of the course and guide the selection of contents.

b) It can be used by the teacher to modify the syllabus and methodology to minimize the gap between the teachers' and learners' expectation.

c) It may be used to identify the gap between the teachers' and learners' expected teaching and learning approach.

2.6 Frameworks for Needs Analysis:

Different types of procedures are suggested for conducting a NA. The selection of procedures depends on the purpose of NA. For example: If one tries to conduct a NA of the writing problem of the students at tertiary level, the information can be obtained from the following sources:

a) Samples of student writing.

b) Test data on students' performance.

c) Reports by teachers on typical problems students face.

d) Information from students via interviews and questionnaire. e) Analysis of text books, teaching and academic writing.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study is classified into descriptive survey which is conducted to draw a profile of students' needs, wants, lacks and learning style. Berwick in Urun & Yarar (2015: 2) states that need analysis can be carried out in a number of different ways which can be classified as either inductive (case studies, observations etc.) or deductive (questionnaires, surveys etc.)

3.2. Participants

The participant of this study is the students of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis which comprised a sample of 50 students from five different departments of second semester students.

3.4 Questionnaire

In order to collect the data about the needs and students expectations toward web-based English learning material, a questionnaire developed by researcher was used. The questionnaire was composed of 34 questions. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers based on the relevant literature and previous studies that tackled the students' needs toward web-based English learning material. The students had to answer

the questions and choose the answer which provided with some choices.

3.5. Procedure of the study

The procedures for the study are as follows:

1. The participants were aware of the purposes of the survey and their approval in participating in the study confirmed.

2. The questionnaires were distributed to the participants and collected with their responses at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis

3. All data were collected and transcribed for analysis.

4. Discussions

There were some aspects involved in the need analysis questionnaire to get the data about the students' lacks, wants, needs and learning needs. The first question asked the students knowledge about Internet-based learning. The result showed that 72% of the students know about Internet-based learning. It meant that the website that would be designed and implemented would not be something new for them. In addition, it would help the research process as it could minimize the technical obstacles. Besides, 56 % of participants said that the website was also needed to be implemented in the class.

Furthermore, the identification the lacks of the students was also questioned. It is important to be examined to identify the level proficiency of the students. By giving the questionnaire, it tried to know what the current level English proficiency of the students. Waters and Breen (cited in Hutchinson and Waters 1990: 56) state that the gap between target proficiency and existing proficiency of the learners can be referred to the learners' lacks. By identifying their lacks, teachers or material developers can modify and adopt the other materials or match the methods in teaching and learning process depended on the situation of the students. Related to the English level proficiency of the students, the data indicated that 62% of the students were in level of beginner, 28% intermediate, and only 10% in advanced level. Tables 11 and 12 display the students' skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Table 3 presents the students' wants in learning materials.

Learning Topic.

To get the data about the learning input that the students needs and wants, the researcher started with the topics that would be used in teaching and learning English, and then the input of speaking, reading, and writing skills. The result indicated that the most topic of the students most wanted in learning English was the topic about daily life (74%), the second choice was about science and technology 36%, education and teenagers' life were 30%. Meanwhile, the type of text that the students wanted to read in learning English was about narrative text 68%, descriptive text 42%, news item 26% and advertisement 22%.

Lacks

It is also important to know the students' difficulties or problems in English. The students faced some difficulties in learning English which relates to four skills, especially for the students who were in the beginner level. The results described that there were some problems that the students face in learning English. Firstly, some of the students (38%) had problem in spelling and 36% in grammar when they spoke. The data also showed that 40% of the students had problem in listening because they had difficulties in catching the meaning what the speaker were talking about. It was because the spelling or the speakers spoke very fast.

The students also got some difficulties in reading and writing. The students said that in writing they (44%) had limited knowledge of grammar and limited vocabulary 32%. It also happened in writing.

Wants and Needs

Related to the students' wants in speaking, the data describes that 66% of the students believe that pronunciation was one of the most essential aspects that must be mastered in order be able to speak English fluently. Then, 38% preferred to learn vocabulary and followed by grammar. They also wanted a simple dialogue (56%) and expression (50%) as the input of learning.

Related to the reading skill, the data indicated that 66% of the students wanted vocabulary and followed by 52% tended to learn skimming and scanning. 44% of the students said that they wanted to learn grammar in

reading skill. They also stated that they wanted some vocabulary definition 21%, simple reading text 32% and authentic text 30% as reading input materials with ≤ 100 words and 10-15 words should be unveiled in every text given.

In terms of writing and listening skills, in writing the student (42%) wanted to learn vocabulary. The students (36%) also claimed that they wanted to learn kinds of text and the rest (34%) preferred learnt how to organize the texts and grammar. For writing learning input the students wanted to learn short stories, poem, and legend 62%, pictures (44%) and novel (36%).

Meanwhile, in listening, they wanted to learn pronunciation (58%), grammar (32%) and pronunciation (30%). They also claimed to have simple dialogue (52%) and text with picture 32% as the learning input for listening with the duration ≥ 5 minutes (34%). For vocabulary the students preferred to learn pronunciation (44%), words definition and spelling (38%). Then, 9% of the students tended to learn synonym.

Learning activities.

The next component in the need analysis questionnaire was learning activity. It referred to what the learners do with the input to accomplish the task. Referring to the result of data, the activities that students most wanted in listening were identifying key word of the monolog or dialogue (40%), discussing the content of the monolog or dialogue (26%), and 8% of the students wanted to identify time and prominent figure in monolog and dialogue and complete spoken response of the dialogue as listening activities.

For speaking activities, based on the result of the data analysis, the students preferred to practice dialogue in pairs (50%), practice e the dialogue based on the picture presented by teacher or in book, text, or module (26%), and discuss the certain updated topics (20%).

Meanwhile for writing activities, the students chose to complete jumble sentences (40%), Make or write texts based on the text that interested in you (22%) and identify and correct sentence structures (20%). In reading activities, the data indicated that 40% of the students preferred to analyze meaning

of the text with particular vocabulary based on the context, and read the text loudly (34%).

Furthermore related to vocabulary activities, to make the students easy to memorize the vocabulary they preferred to listen songs (64%) and they wanted to match the English words or expressions to the correct meaning provided (50%) and 26% of the students chose sentence completion and identify the meaning of sentences or paragraphs by using the words provided. Meanwhile for grammar activities the students preferred to identify grammar error in sentences and write sentences or paragraphs based on the grammar that ever learnt (19%).

5. Conclusion

Need analysis plays an important role in second language or foreign language learning classes. It is important because through needs analysis teachers, learners, teaching materials, teaching procedures-all make a harmonious relationship that enhance learners' learning. This information creates a number of benefits to teachers. First of all, before designing web-based English learning material, the authors can analyze their work and to reconsider some issues, if necessary. Second, the authors can reconsider its syllabus when and create web-based learning material. Moreover, teaching methods and strategies may be reconsidered. Being aware of students' needs and wants a teacher or lecturer may influence students' motivation and to assure their interest in the learning martial. Students 'motivation is a very serious issue as this factor is a guarantee of a successful outcome of studying. The ability to meet students' needs is the main factor teachers should consider as students pay primary attention to how their interests are addressed. Furthermore, the research results indicated that the students were in the beginner level. They wanted to have various learning topics in learning English using website such as the topics related to daily life, science and technology and about teenagers' life. In learning activities for four skills the students preferred to practice the dialogue in pairs for speaking skill, complete jumble sentences for writing skill, identify key word of the monolog or dialogue for listening, listen music for vocabulary learning

activities and identify grammar error in sentences and write sentences or paragraphs based on the grammar that ever learnt for grammar learning activities.

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