
LEARNERS' LANGUAGE NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SUBJECT IN AZKIA INTEGRATED ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the writer analyzed the objective of English learning at Azkia Integrated Islamic Primary School and the pupils' needs in learning English. The paper described pupils' needs, which are divided into the target needs and the learning needs. The study employed qualitative method, which used phenomenology approach. The data were collected from classroom observations, interviews, and documentary analysis, and then were analyzed and classified into the target needs and the learning needs. The findings showed that the pupils' needs to be fulfilled in learning English are introducing English at the early stage, coping English language in the classroom and the daily lives, emphasizing vocabulary building and its development, applying recognizable topics to support vocabulary mastery, giving a wide range of instruments which stimulates the pupils using English in their daily lives. Further, learning English can be easier for the pupils when the concrete objects are utilized well and visual aids are made available.

Key words: needs analysis; teaching English for young learners; pupils needs; target needs; learning needs

ABSTRAK

Dalam artikei ini, penulis menganalisa tujuan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Azkia dan kebutuhan siswa dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris. Artikel ini menggambarkan kebutuhan siswa, yang dikelompokkan dalam target needs dan learning needs. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Data diperoleh dari observasi kelas, wawancara dan analisis dokumentasi, yang kemudian dianalisis dan diklasifikasikan ke dalam Target needs dan learning needs. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa kebutuhan siswa yang harus dipenuhi dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris adalah memperkenalkan bahasa Inggris pada usia dini, menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dalam kelas dan kehidupan sehari-hari, menekankan pembentukan kosa kata dan perkembangannya, menerapkan topik yang familiar demi mendukung pemahaman kosa kata, memperbanyak alat yang mendorong siswa menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Kemudian, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat lebih mudah jika benda-benda konkrit dimanfaatkan dengan baik dan di lengkapi dengan bantuan visual.

Kata kunci: : analisis kebutuhan; pembelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk usia dini; kebutuhan siswa; tujuan kebutuhan pembelajaran; kebutuhan pembelajaran

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INTRODUCTION

English subject in Primary Schools in Indonesia acts as a local-content subject, which according to Huda (1999), is intended to develop abilities to understand simple oral and written expressions. According to *Permendiknas* No. 22/2006 on content standards, it is explained that the purpose of learning English in Indonesia is directed for pupils in order to:

1. have an ability to develop competencies in the form of limited verbal communication to accompany the action in the context of school;
2. have awareness on the nature and the importance of English to increase the nation's competitiveness in global society; and
3. develop students' understanding about the relevance between language and culture.

Meanwhile, the reality has shown that the competencies established in *Permendiknas* No. 22/2006 on content standards cannot be achieved optimally. Consequently, the competency of English language possessed by primary school pupils is still far from the expectations. This fact

has raised several problems that impede the process of English language teaching in primary schools. According to the result of a preliminary study conducted by the writers, the main problem mostly found in the classroom is lack of pupils' motivation in participating in the English learning process in the classroom.

The English teaching method mostly found in the classroom is so-called the conventional method. It means that teachers have not fully implemented creative and innovative learning. Teachers usually teach only with conventional method in delivering materials such as writing down the material on the white/black board and explain it to the pupils and ask them to write on their notebook or memorize it. Consequently, pupils' skill to communicate in verbal and written form of English is very limited. Furthermore, this method causes pupils to be bored and lack of motivation in participating in the English learning process in the classroom. To solve these problems, teachers need to have a good understanding about selecting appropriate teaching materials and methods, children learning characteristics, and how they learn languages.

There are many considerations on selecting appropriate teaching materials and methods. According to Richards, one of the basic assumptions of the curriculum development is that a sound educational program should be based on an analysis of learners' needs (2001). It can be assumed that one of the basic assumptions in selecting appropriate teaching materials and methods is based on an analysis of pupils' needs.

Needs analysis or needs assessment is the first step to identify pupils' language needs in selecting appropriate teaching materials and methods based on pupils' needs. Richard et al. (as cited in Jordan, 1997) defined needs analysis as an essential method of carrying out research prior to design and evaluate materials or syllabus and it helps draw a profile of students or course in order to determine the needs for which students require English. By conducting needs analysis, teachers can teach suitable materials to their pupils with suitable methods which can increase pupils' motivation in participating in the English learning process in the classroom. In other words, needs analysis is a method used to determine learners' language needs.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) offer 'learning-centered approach' to

complete 'target-situation analysis approach' proposed by Munby in conducting needs analysis. They involved learning as "a process of negotiation between individuals and society (which includes teaching, syllabus, methods, materials, etc.)". Besides, they also compare 'target needs' (what the learner needs to do in the target situation) with 'learning needs' (what the learner needs to do in order to learn). Furthermore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) compare target needs (what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and learning needs (what the learner needs to do in order to learn). Then, they sub-divide target needs into necessities, lacks, and wants. The analysis framework of a target situation includes:

- (1) Why is the language needed? (for study, work, training, combination of these, or some other reasons, e.g. status, examination, promotion);
- (2) how will the language be used? (medium: speaking, writing, reading, etc; channel: e.g. telephone, face to face; type of text or discourse: e.g. academic text, lectures, informal conversations, etc.);
- (3) what will the content areas be (subjects: medicine, biology, daily lives, shipping, etc; level: e.g. technician, postgraduate, secondary school);
- (4) who will the learner use the language with?

(native speakers or non-native; level of knowledge of receiver: e.g. expert, student, beginner; relationship: e.g. colleague, teacher, customer, subordinate, etc); (5) where will the language be used? (physical setting: e.g. office, school, workshop, library; human context: e.g. alone, meetings, demonstrations, on telephone, dialogue; linguistic context: e.g. in own country, abroad). (6) when will the language be used? (concurrently with the ESP course or subsequently; and frequently, seldom, in small amounts, in large chunks). (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, pp.55-56)

On the other hand, according to Hutchinson and Water (1987, p. 60), learning needs refer to “knowledge and abilities that the learners require in order to be able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation (p. 60). Similarly, they also compiled a simple framework for analyzing learning needs. The framework includes:

(1) why are the learners taking the course? (compulsory or optional; apparent need or not; are status, money, promotion involved?; what do learners think they will achieve?; what is their attitude toward the ESP course? ; do they want to

improve their English or do they resent the time they have to spend on it?); (2) how do the learners learn? (what is their learning background?; what is their concept of teaching and learning?; what methodology will appeal to them; what sorts of techniques are likely to bore/alienate them?); (3) what resources are available? (number and professional competence of teachers; attitude of teachers to ESP; teachers’ knowledge of and attitude to the subject content; material; Aids; opportunities for out-of-class activities); (4) who are the learners? (age/sex/nationality; what do they know already about English?; what subject knowledge do they have?; what are their interests?; what is their socio-cultural background?; what teaching styles are they used to?; what is their attitude to English or the cultures of the English-speaking world?); (5) where will the ESP course take place? (are the surroundings pleasant, dull, noisy, cold, etc?); (6) when will the ESP course take place? (time of day; everyday/once a week; full-time/part-time; concurrent with need or pre-need). (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, pp.59-60)

In this study, this learning - centered approach is used to find out

learners' language needs on English subject in primary school based on their target needs and learning needs. Furthermore, the writer adapted the target needs based on its classification (necessities, want, lack) and the framework in analyzing target situation (target needs) and developed it into five themes. The themes are the objective of teaching English in primary school, the situations needed in learning English, the contents/materials that need to be taught in learning English for primary school, the wants in learning English for primary school, and the difficulties that need to be overcome in teaching and learning English in primary school.

Relating to children learning characteristics, it is clearly observed that children are often more enthusiastic as learners. Moreover, they will be interested in an activity even though they may not fully understand why and how they do that. However, they cannot keep their motivation on tasks that they find difficult and they also lose their interest rapidly. Corsaro proposed, as cited in Musthafa (2010), that children do differently from that of adults. Consequently, children should be treated and appreciated appropriately in their own right.

The theories from Piaget and Vygotsky on children cognitive

development can give descriptions related on how children learn, and it is also used as basic assumptions on teaching English to young learners. Piaget (1954) postulates, as cited in Santrock (2011), that children construct their understanding of the world around them. The children are seen as continually solving their problems that are presented by the environment. Children's thought develop from derived action then action is carried out in the mind mentally or internalized. According to Piagetian psychology, as cited in Cameron (2001), a result of activity, which development can take place is divided into two ways namely assimilation and accommodation. When action takes place without any change to the child, it is called assimilation, whereas accommodation involves the child adjusting to features of the environment in some way.

Beside Piaget, Vygotsky also believes that children construct their knowledge actively. However, Vygotsky concerns on culture and social interaction aspects in cognitive development. According to Santrock (2011, p. 50), Vygotsky used "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) as "the term for the range of tasks that are too difficult for the child to master alone but that can be learned with guidance and assistance of adults or more skilled

children". He added that the lower limit of the ZPD is the level of skill reached by the child working independently and the upper limit is the level of additional responsibility the child can accept with the assistance of an able instructor. In other words, the ZPD captures the child's cognitive skills that are in the maturing process and can be accomplished only with the assistance of a more-skilled person.

In Vygotsky's perspective, language takes an important part in children development. According to Vygotsky (as cited in Cameron, 2001, p. 5), "language provides the children with a new tool and opens up new opportunities for doing things and organizing information through the use of words as symbols." In other words, children use spoken language not only for social communication, but also to help them solve tasks. Furthermore, Vygotsky (as cited in Santrock, 2011, p. 53), argued that "young children use language to plan, guide, and monitor their behavior".

All children in the world acquire their native language without formal drill, and there are some theories related to the language acquisition process. Chomsky (1959) believed, as cited in McClosley (2002), that every

child has an innate ability to learn and use a language.

On the other hand, Bruner (as cited in Cameron, 2001), proposed a term "Language Acquisition Support System", which popularly known as "Scaffolding", to explain adults' or peers' helps using language in the form of talk to mediate the world for children and help them to solve problems around them. By using scaffolding, children can understand their tasks easily because helps come from adults and peers are formed in fine-tuned helps. Moreover, good scaffolding is tuned to the needs of the children and adjusted as the children become more competent.

From the background above, the writers attempt to find out the empirical evidence of language needs of Azkia Integrated Islamic Primary School pupils, which is needed to fulfill their target needs and learning needs in learning English. In addition, it is also deemed necessary to study whether these needs are in line with the objectives of learning English.

METHOD

The Location of the Study

This study was conducted at Azkia Integrated Islamic Primary

School (AIIPS) from 11 November – 6 December 2013. The first week of this study was used for documentary research analysis, and the last three weeks was used for classroom observation and interviews.

Azkiya Integrated Islamic Primary School is located at Duren Mekar village, Bojong Sari, Sawangan, Depok. The school is established and operated in 2010, and there are eight classes registered from the first grade until the fourth grade. English subject is taught from the first grade until the fourth grade as a local-content subject, and it has time allotment two contact hours in a week.

In determining the subjects of this study, the researchers used a purposeful sampling in order to help the researcher understanding the central phenomenon. According to Creswell (2012), purposeful sampling was aimed to learn or understand the central phenomenon by selecting individuals and sites intentionally. The subjects of the study were teachers, pupils, and parents of pupils in the third and the fourth grade of Azkiya Integrated Islamic Primary School. The researchers' reason choosing them as the subjects of this study was the pupils got the experience on both the foreign

language week program and English course provided by the school.

The Design of the Study

This study employed a qualitative method by phenomenology approach, which aims at finding out numerous views of specific phenomenon in a limited population. This study focused on pupils needs on developing their English competencies in the form of limited verbal communication to accompany the action in the school context as the bounded subject of the study.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The data were collected by using three techniques. They were observation, interview, and documentary analysis.

Observation

In this case, the observation was conducted by observing target needs to compile a profile of learners' language needs, and learning needs such as teaching methods and techniques used by teachers, and teaching and learning process in the classrooms of the third and the fourth grade where English subject was taught. Moreover, observation in this study was used to find out the relevancy of the syllabus

and the lesson plans used during teaching and learning process.

Interview

The interviewees were a teacher and four parents of AIIPS students and the interview was conducted by using interviewing guide and was held in one of classrooms on AIIPS. This interview aimed at getting information related to the target and the learning needs of English subject and teaching English for young learners.

Documentary Analysis

For this study, the English subject syllabus and its lesson plans for the primary school were collected. After the data were collected, the content of the syllabus and the lesson plan were comprehensively compared and analyzed. The enhancement of documentary analysis was done by comparing the content of standard competence and basic competence with the syllabus.

Data Analysis Techniques and the Validity of Data

After collecting the data using documentation, observation, and interview, then the researchers prepared for data analysis by reading and identifying them. The data were coded for description and themes used

in the research finding. The process of data analysis explained previously was referred to the qualitative process of data analysis made by Cresswell (2012). After analyzing the obtained data, the triangulation strategy was used to check the validation of the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the target needs, there are five points needed to fulfill the target needs of the pupils in learning English. They are introducing English at the early stage, coping English language in the classroom and the daily lives, emphasizing vocabulary building and its development, applying recognizable topics to support vocabulary mastery, giving a wide range of instruments which stimulate the pupils using English in their daily lives.

In terms of the learning needs, there are several points to fulfill the learning needs of the pupils in learning English. Firstly, English can be easier for the pupils when the concrete objects are utilized well. Secondly, visual aids should be made available to facilitate better teaching and learning process. In addition, teaching methods should vary and emphasize the use of visual illustration and physical movement to

create more attractive learning environment.

The discussion is divided into two parts, namely target needs and learning needs. The target needs concern the objective of teaching English in primary school, the situation needed in learning English, the content or materials to be taught, the wants in learning English and the difficulties in learning English. The learning needs discuss the ways pupils learn English, the pupils' learning styles, the learning resources and the teaching method.;

Target Needs

The Objective of Teaching English in Primary School

The objective of teaching English in primary school is to introduce English from early age. It was concluded from the result of the interview with the five respondents of this research. The four of pupils' parents similarly argued that the objective of teaching English in primary school is introducing English to the pupils. Besides, the teacher thought that the objective of teaching English is developing the pupils' competence on simple communication in English orally in the school context. What the teacher thought was similar to one of the objectives of teaching English in

primary school established by the government on *Permendiknas* No. 22/2006. Nonetheless, the objective established by the government is implicitly aimed to introduce English in elementary level.

The Situations Needed in Learning English

Based on the interviews, there are two situations that the pupils learn and use English language. The first is they learn and use English during English subject class, and the second is they learn and use English when they face the English language in their daily lives such as watching television, playing video games, etc. The finding is supported by the result of observation that the pupils learn and use English during English subject class. For example, a pupil asked to borrow an eraser to another pupil using English language by saying "can I borrow your eraser?".

The Contents/Materials that Need to be Taught in Learning English for Primary School

Related to the contents or materials that need to be taught in learning English for primary school, the teacher and most of pupils' parents stated that the topics should be related to pupils' life such as home, school, their daily activities, etc. These topic are

expected to facilitate the pupils in recognizing English language from the early ages. This finding is supported by the result of documentary analysis that the topics used in learning English are related to the world around pupils. Likewise, it is also reinforced from Piaget's argument that children construct their understanding of the world around them. In this case, introducing English language to the pupils through the topics related to their lives and world around them can facilitate them to learn English easier.

The Wants in Learning English

There were various responses related to the wants in learning English for primary school. Based on the result of the interviews, half of the respondents from the pupils' parents said that the pupils should comprehend English vocabulary as much as possible in order to prepare them in learning English in the high schools level. Another respondent argued that the primary school should attach an English proficiency program such as TOEFL, TOEIC, etc. to the English syllabus and apply the English language usage in the school environment. However, the teacher argued that the pupils should first comprehend English vocabularies related to their daily lives before they

study for other purposes. Besides, they also should be able to communicate with English language orally by using simple utterances, and read and write simple English words and sentences.

The Difficulties in Learning and Teaching English

There are three difficulties revealed from this research. The first difficulty concerns the fact that many students are less-familiar with English words. Secondly, many students have difficulties in differentiating between spoken English and written English. Finally, students have difficulties to use English orally.

In addition, there were some pupils who were less-motivated in learning English. According to the teacher, some pupils were less-motivated due to their perception about English, which is also influenced by their environment. For example, one of pupils lives in an environment that considers learning English language is difficult, complicated, and so forth; this situation has made the pupil has similar perception toward English and consequently it makes him or her become less-motivated.

Furthermore, the result of observation showed that there are also some pupils who really need special

attention in their study. For instance, there were some pupils who cannot understand teacher's explanation in learning simple utterances which have explained several times even though the teacher had explained it more than twice. To solve this problem, the teacher, based on the interview, created fun activities during teaching-learning process while occasionally giving more attention to pupils who need to be given special attention.

Learning Needs

The Ways of Pupils Learn English

The pupils learn, in this case learning English, through the concrete and real things. From the result of the interview, all of the respondents have the same idea that children learn English from the concrete and real things around them. The teacher added that the pupils were difficult to imagine the concrete things if she did not show the illustration about them.

The Pupils' Learning Style

Regarding to the learning styles used by the pupils in learning English, according to the teacher, many pupils in this school used visual learning style and the others used kinesthetic and audio learning style. It was supported by the result of classroom observation

that many pupils used visual learning style rather than audio or kinesthetic learning style during English language class.

The Learning Resources

According to the teacher, the available sources in teaching English in this school are English language textbook, CD audio, and English material complements from internet. It is supported by the finding on the syllabuses and the lesson plans that the sources used in teaching English are English language textbook, CD audio, and English material complements from internet.

The Teaching Method

Based on the classroom observation, the pupils were more interested to learn when they were presented with physical movement and visual illustration. It was reinforced by the argument from the teacher that using visualization and physical movement in explaining the English material is the interesting teaching method for the pupils.

However, from the syllabuses and the lesson plans used by the English teacher, it shows that English teaching in this school employs conventional teaching method in its implementation

level. Nevertheless, based on the finding of the classroom observation, the teacher used the integrated skill approach in teaching English. When teaching vocabulary, the teacher began to write the topic on the white board then discussed what would be taught with the pupils.

After the pupils understood the topic that they would learn, the teacher prepared a laptop and CD contained voices related to the vocabulary that would be taught on the class then played a track of the CD using the laptop. The track was played three times in order to train the pupils listening and understanding English words and its utterances. After that, the teacher wrote down the English vocabularies on the white board and gave the meaning of the words by giving clues through body language and clue sentences in English or Indonesian language. Next, she asked the pupils chorally and then individually to repeat the word that she had said. When she felt that the pupils can pronounce the words well, she asked them to write down the vocabularies written on the white board. At the same time, the pupils learnt how to read the vocabularies written on the white board when they were writing the vocabularies on their notebooks. After the pupils finished

their writing, she checked the pupils' writing and corrected the writings if she found the mistakes from the pupils' writing. The similar approach applied with some modifications when the teacher taught language competencies.

In addition, the result the of classroom observation showed that the teacher developed her teaching procedures in the classroom. It was described when the differences appeared between what was written on the lesson plans made by the teacher and how she taught the subject in the classroom. She clarified this finding by arguing that what was written in lesson plans was used as the basic guidelines in teaching English, so she tried to develop the lesson plans during teaching learning process in the classroom.

According to the teacher, lack of variety in teaching English and the explanation without giving concrete examples are the teaching techniques that need to be avoided during English subject class. These findings are reinforced by the results of observation which is showed that the pupils began to feel bored when teacher was too long in one activity and when she did not use concrete examples in her explanation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Needs analysis is a systematic procedure that is performed to collect information about learners' needs and it is used as the basis for developing curriculum in order to meet learners' needs. The result of the study showed that there are two kinds of needs that should be fulfilled in order to develop the pupils' competencies in the form of limited verbal communication to accompany the action in the context of school. They are target needs and learning needs.

In the target needs, there are five aspects that have to be fulfilled in teaching English in primary school. The first is the need to introduce English in early age. The second is the need to manage the learning activities so that they represent pupils' daily activities such as watching television, playing video games, etc. In other words, there is a need to create learning environment that resembles students' daily life. The third is the need to use familiar topics while the fourth is the need to focus the teaching and learning on vocabulary building. This is important to support the pupils in developing English language competencies such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The last is the need to provide a wide range of tools that enable the

pupils to meet the English language in their daily lives such as providing vocabulary list with illustrations and creating various fun activities. These are expected to overcome the difficulties found in teaching and learning English in primary school.

Similarly, there are also five aspects that have to be fulfilled in teaching English in primary school related to the learning needs. The first concerns the need to use concrete objects available around pupils' environment or to visualize those objects. The second is the use of visual aids optimally to facilitate the pupils to learn English easier, especially because many pupils in this school are visual learners. The third is the need to use various materials including audio video and other supplementary materials from internet. The fourth deals with teaching methods, which findings of this study suggest the use of visual illustration and physical movement while explaining the English material (Total Physical Respond). The last one suggests that teachers should not explain to the pupils without giving any concrete examples. The use of various teaching methods and techniques and visual illustration or concrete objects can increase the pupils' motivation in learning English.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to offer suggestion to English teachers, parents and curriculum designers. Firstly, the English teacher should consider five points related to this study. First, the English teacher has to remember that the purpose of teaching English in primary school is to develop competencies in the form of limited verbal communication to accompany the action in the context of school. Besides, he or she has to apply the objectives on the syllabus, lesson plans, and teaching-learning process in the classroom. Second, the teacher has to help the pupils to overcome their difficulties in learning English. Third, the teacher has to teach the materials that the pupils need to facilitate the use of English on the relevant situations such as in the school context. Fourth, the teacher has to use various methods and techniques to avoid the pupils getting bored during English subject class. The last, the teacher has to understand how the pupils learn a language, in this case English, because it can facilitate both the teacher and the pupils to create an effective English teaching and learning. Concerning parents, the findings of this study suggest that parents as adults should give guidance and supports to encourage the pupils in learning English. When the pupils have guidance and supports from their parents they will learn English with high motivation that encourages them to master English well. Finally, with regards the curriculum

designers, the findings of the study are expected to give valuable contribution to English curriculum designers as a basis of improving, developing, and evaluating the existing curriculum.

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