

NEED ANALYSIS STAGE IN RECONSTRUCTING SYLLABUS AND DEVELOPING TEACHING MATERIALS FOR *ORACY IN ACADEMIC CONTEXT* SUBJECT

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Abstract

The focus of this current article is on the needs analysis phase in a project exploring the reconstruction of a syllabus and developing teaching materials for *Oracy in Academic Context* subject. The subject has only been recently incorporated in the curriculum of the English Department in Teacher Training and Education Faculty (FKIP), at Universitas Jambi in Indonesia. Therefore, the syllabus has not fully reviewed since it was created. This current paper describes the need analysis stage as one of the research and development (R & D) phases which consists of analysis, design, development, and evaluation (ADDIE) model in developing the syllabus for this subject. Adapting Nation and Macalister's framework (2010), this stage considers the lecturers', the head of the English department's, and the students' point of views. The data from the needs analysis phase point to the importance of this stage in redesigning the syllabus and developing teaching materials. Using the data from the all four sources, the researchers in this current research, as syllabus and materials developers can begin to identify the most important aspects to be included in the syllabus and the materials to be included.

Keywords: Analysis, syllabus, teaching materials

INTRODUCTION

Responding to the national curriculum change in 2017, the English Department of Jambi University, Indonesia, revised the necessary syllabi and materials of its subjects. As a result of the revision, since 2018, several new subjects have been introduced. This study is concentrates on one of them, *Oracy in Academic Context*, worth 4 credits. The first implementation of the subject was in 2018 for the third semester students. The syllabus was created by the four lecturers who taught the course, and so it was not developed through the usual research and development (R & D) procedures. The syllabus contains of 14 topics for each of the 14 meetings, namely:

1. Delivering formal presentation,

2. Asking questions and responding to others' speech,
3. Explaining understanding to others,
4. Engaging in debate,
5. Sharing opinion and ideas,
6. Agreeing and disagreeing,
7. Reflecting experiences,
8. Reviewing books,
9. Evaluating movies,
10. Talking about places,
11. Examining food,
12. Observing life-style,
13. Discussing characters, and
14. Playing a role in improvised or scripted drama activities.

Due to the absence of the research and development (R & D) procedures such as indicated by ADDIE model or Nation and

Macalister's (2010) steps in producing the syllabus and developing materials for *Oracy in Academic Context* subject, the researchers endeavoured to reconstruct the syllabus and materials for this subject. The steps include: environment analysis, need analysis, application of principles, goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, monitoring and assessment, and evaluation. This paper, however, only presents the needs analysis stage of the syllabus construction of *Oracy in Academic Context* subject. As Nation and Macalister (2010) argue, the need analysis stage will inform the syllabus designers or the teachers about what the learners acquire at the moment, what the learners need in the future, and what they expect to obtain after taking the subject. As also argued by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), learners' needs are categorized into *necessities* (items the learners have to acquire to function effectively), *lacks* (items the learners have acquired and have not acquired), and *wants* (items that the learners think they need to acquire). Therefore, this analysis stage is a crucial step in designing a syllabus for a subject.

METHODOLOGY

The data from this study is derived from interviewing the participants; namely, the Head of the English Department in the Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Jambi University, three lecturers who taught *Oracy in Academic Context* class, and 12 students who attended this class in 2018. They were interviewed individually by the researchers to reveal the necessities, lack, and wants. The interviews were in Bahasa Indonesia and audio recorded. The audio recorded data then transcribed and translated into English. In particular, the questions for the Head of the English Department aimed to investigate: the underlying considerations of establishing the coursework; the criteria required to be the lecturers in the *Oracy* class; the target skill expected from the students who take this class; the lecturers' teaching strategies; the activities for the students; the materials for

the coursework; the facilities; and suggestions regarding to the coursework. The interview questions that were given to the lecturers explored their understanding of the *Oracy in Academic Context* coursework; skills the students have to obtain after taking the coursework, teaching and learning strategies, teaching and learning materials, assessment, facilities, and suggestions related to the coursework. In comparison, the interview questions for the students were set up around the topics that were listed in the previous syllabus and topics they wanted to be included; their lecturers' teaching strategies; assessment; teaching and learning materials; and their comments on how to improve the quality of the *Oracy in Academic Context* subject. The Head of the English Department in this study has been given the abbreviation of 'Dlt', and the lecturers in this study are referred as 'Nr', 'Re', and 'Ne'. While the students' voices are presented as groups of opinions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Considering establishing Oracy in Academic Context coursework

The questions about the particular reason for developing the subject, *Oracy in Academic Context*, was addressed to Dlt, as the Head of the English Department. She explained that at the beginning of 2016, the English Department was granted a sponsorship to revise its curriculum from LP3M (*Lembaga Pengembangan Pembelajaran dan Penjaminan Mutu*), Quality Assurance and Learning Development Office, of Universitas Jambi to revise its curriculum. The aim of the revision was to develop the curriculum in accordance with KKNi (*Kerangka kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia*), the Indonesian National Qualification Framework. The principle aim of this framework is to undertake an evaluation of an individual's performance which encompasses aspects of knowledge, competencies, and skills accorded with learning attainment achieved through educational process, training, or experience as indicated by particular descriptor level. It

had also been quite a long time since the curriculum had not been revised. Therefore, 2017 was the perfect time to execute the revision.

One of the revision made by the curriculum revision team, which consisted of several English lecturers, was to merge the productive and receptive skills particularly in the advanced levels while maintaining the basic productive and receptive skills subjects such as *Speaking for General Purposes*. Dlt explained that this is based on the consideration that listening and speaking could not be separated because listening is the receptive form while speaking is the product form. This is due to perhaps as Tavitl (2010) explained, listening is an interactive process where the listener is also reacting to other speaker(s). Dlt further stated that it is necessary for language learners to have thorough understandings of the language they are exposed to and to give appropriate responses. This is also perhaps, as argued by Brown (1994), speaking is an interactive process of meaning-making that encompasses generating, and receiving, and processing information. Thus, highlighting the aim of helping the learners to function communicatively and effectively in academic settings, it was a deliberate decision to develop *Oracy in Academic Context*, a subject that integrates both listening and speaking, to accommodate these needs.

Lecturers' and Students' Understanding of The Oracy in Academic Context Course

Nr believed that *Oracy* class focuses not only on speaking skill but also on listening skill. Re shared her understanding about oracy class that it is about skills needed by students to perform in academic context. Ne explained that *Oracy* class was a combination of speaking and listening, yet she maintained that in her own class she focused more on speaking skill. On students' side, four out of twelve students interviewed for this research stated that *Oracy in Academic Context* class is about speaking and listening skills, while the rest thought it is about speaking skill

only. As it is implied, both lecturers and students understand that this new coursework is a combination of speaking and listening skills, yet most of the participants in this research indicated their strong understanding that this new coursework emphasises only speaking skills. This could be because the term 'oracy' itself invites people to think about delivering speech and pushes aside the fact that there is aspect of listening in two-way communication. More students in this study answered that *Oracy in Academic Context* is about speaking perhaps also due to the fact that at the beginning of the coursework, the lecturer did not explain the objectives of this coursework thoroughly. It could also be that activities in the classroom did not cover both speaking and listening skill proportionally. Therefore, in reconstructing the new syllabus for *Oracy in Academic Context*, it is important to define clear objectives for the coursework, and proportionate activities that cover speaking and listening skills for students.

The Objectives of Oracy in Academic Context Course

Tyler (1949/2014) explained that educational objectives "represent the kinds of changes in behaviour that an education institution seeks to bring about in its students" (p. 101). Therefore, it is important to define the objectives before we develop the syllabus for the coursework. The Head of the English Department (Dlt) stated that this coursework was a combination of listening and speaking skills, and that the goal of this coursework was to assist the students to be able to listen and produce their speech in academic context. Nr thought that the goals of this coursework were to develop students' ability in communication, including helping students to gain skills in expressing opinions and being confident to speak in front of the classroom. From Re's point of view, the objectives of *Oracy in Academic Context* classes were to ensure that activities related to speaking skills for advanced levels was fulfilled. Ne stated that the objective of the coursework was to encourage students to

speak actively in academic context. From the interview with the lecturers, it is clear that they still put more even special emphasis on speaking skill. The same is true for the students.

Nine students thought that the objectives of this coursework were to improve their speaking skills in general: public speaking; speaking skill in academic contexts; speaking skill to be a competent English teacher. Three students included the listening skill in addition to speaking skills improvement as the objective of the coursework. This shows that only small numbers participants realized that this coursework was also about listening skill. This strong inclination toward the importance of speaking could also due to the reason asserted by Richards and Renandya (2002) that “a large percentage of the world’s language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking” (p. 201). A new syllabus, then, had to redraw the objectives defined by department as Dlt explained, to enable students to function effectively in listening with and to others, and producing their speech in academic contexts.

Students’ Expectation of Taking Oracy in Academic Context Course and How They Perceived it After Completing the Coursework

The term expectation, as argued by Sullivan (2016), refers to “an individual’s beliefs of how something should (or should not) be, or what form something should (or should not) take” (p. 36). In this research, interestingly, only one student mentioned about how she wanted to improve her listening skills after taking this coursework. Most of the students are in unison on how they expected their speaking skill would be improved upon completing the coursework. Again, either the former syllabus or the lecturers failed to convey to the students that this coursework is not merely about improving students’ speaking skills. With the exception of one student, who thought that she did not feel her expectation was fulfilled after taking the coursework, the majority of the students agreed they felt that

they acquired what they had expected. What they had expected was related to speaking skills only. Therefore, the whole idea of establishing this new coursework as referred to in the departmental blue print was not achieved. The new syllabus needed to construct the strong line that this coursework would assist the students to gain listening and speaking skills simultaneously.

The Topics Included in Oracy in Academic Context Syllabus

Nr and Ne found all the topics in the syllabus were related to educational issues; therefore, they did not find any objections to it. Re agreed that most of the topics were useful because they related to education; yet she noted some concerns related to topics that were redundant. Ten students contended that the topics included in the existing syllabus were suitable for what they needed, and one student thought the syllabus did not match what she needed. She argued that issues such as UNICEF should be included to foster the students to enquire into knowledge, instead of discussing things that were commonly known. Other students, although they agreed all the topics suited their needs, suggested that topics such as news reporting and conversation could be worth included in the syllabus. The researcher took account what the lecturers and the students said about the topics included in the existing syllabus. They reviewed redundant topics, and added some topics mentioned by the students to accommodate what they needed in the future. Yet, it is important to be noted that amongst 14 topics presented in the previous syllabus, very little attention is given to improving listening skills. As it is reflected, all the topics require students’ presentation skills. Meanwhile, the *Oracy* course is a combination of speaking and listening skills, which according to Brown (1994) and Tavil (2010) are interactive processes which we can argue should have balance proportion in implementation.

The Topics that Should Not Be Included in The Oracy Academic Context Syllabus

Re expresses concerns about topic 2 (asking questions and responding to others' speech) and topic 3 that appeared to be similar. She suggested blending them to avoid redundancy. Examining food was chosen by two students as the topic that should not be in the syllabus because she thought the activities would be too similar to sharing opinion and ideas, which actually was another topic in the syllabus. One argued that topic 'reviewing books' and 'evaluating movies' should be integrated into just one topic. She suggested the new topic of the integration become evaluating and reviewing literacy. Further, another student said that the topic was not academic enough. He said that it was the topic about 'talking about places'. Reviewing to the former topics included in the syllabus, the researcher are aware that some of the topics irrelevant to the coursework. Due to the objectives of the coursework, the topics should encompasses activities that commonly occurred in academic contexts. These activities, for instance, formal speech to large audience, oral presentation with visual aid, engaging in debate, scholarship interview skills, interviewing research participant, attending conference, and note-taking skills.

The Teaching and Learning Method

Teaching method can be defined as any practices utilized to assist students learning process and fulfilment (Dorgu, 2015). As regards to methods used in the Oracy class, Dlt suggested that the lecturer had the right to design the activities, only if the activities or the teaching and learning approach were kept in line with KKNi (Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia), Indonesian National Qualification Framework. This KKNi encouraged student-centred learning, and lecturers were expected to stimulate project-based learning to encourage students to be innovative, creative, and cooperative. The department also expected lecturers to facilitate students to be independent and collaborative learners. Nr used to ask the

students to do presentation sessions, individually and in groups. Before the students performed, she usually asked the students to find videos related to the topics given. She thought that the method was effective in this class. Re mentioned that she asked the students to perform their speech individually, and asked them in groups to perform drama and discussion. For the final discussion, she set up the current issues and divided the students into group and assigned them to present one topic to each group. Ne demonstrated the need to apply student-centred strategy in her classroom. She only guided the students before the students presented the topics given. She encouraged the students to find any related information in the internet, then discussed them collectively before the students made their presentations. She also said that sometimes there were classroom discussions, and also lecturing sessions.

Students mentioned individual and group presentations, debates, speeches, performances, discussions, using videos, and lecturing as the teaching and learning methods used in the *Oracy in Academic Context classroom*. They mentioned that the lecturer assigned them the topics or videos to be presented individually or in groups, debated, performed, and discussed. Only a small portion of the lecturers' input gave the students the autonomy to explore their skills in speaking. All the students confirmed they were able to follow these types of learning and teaching methods. They said, these methods were effective because the students practiced their speaking skills, interacted with other students, and watched the video. Yet, one student argued that in the lecturer frequently gave the students too much autonomy so that sometimes the students misunderstood the tasks and what they presented were performances that actually were not required. And as it was revealed from the interviews, the lecturers relied heavily on You Tube videos as the source of knowledge for the students. Students are given too much authority to find their own resources. Yet, it has to be noted that even in

a student-centred classroom, teacher is expected to provide guidance, modelling, and feedback which were missing from the interviews with the participants.

On the Assessment System

Jayaraman (2017) explained that “assessment is a measure of the level of teaching and learning achieved” (p. 133). She further elucidated the differences between evaluation and assessment, in which she argued that evaluation is a continual sequence to assign value to learner while assessment is a point in this sequence used to make decision about the learners’ progress. Nr asserted that she used rubric to assess students’ performance; yet, she also considered the students’ effort in her class and also attendances. Re also assessed the students based on their individual performances which she drew out of their grammar, vocabulary appropriateness, and pronunciation. Ne explained she took her students’ grades from mid and final tests to measure their speaking ability, their active participation, and attendance. Responding to the question about the assessment system they experienced in *Oracy in Academic Context* coursework, the students answered that the lecturers graded their performances right after their presentations. Yet the students were not given the scoring rubric so they did not get clear ideas of what the lecturers were evaluating. The lecturers also took account of students’ participation in the classroom. Most of the students declared that they were satisfied with the grading system, yet they suggested that the lecturers should give them the scoring rubrics so they understood what to expect from their presentations. One students said that it would be better, too, if the lecturers gave the students prompt evaluation. One student also criticised the fact that that the lecturers were not consistent when giving grades to group presentation because not all members had the same input in the performances. Learning from the interview data, the researcher are committed to provide scoring rubrics for speaking and listening skill for the next

syllabus and teaching materials which will be useful for either lecturers and students to define goals that should be accomplished by the students.

The Extra Assignment in Addition to Performance/Presentation in Each Meeting

Nr explained that the students were asked to look for the videos and articles related to the topics given. Ne said there was a project outside the classroom but that the students were required to perform in the class. Half the students agreed that students ought to be assigned more task apart from their performances in the classroom. They argued that, to train students’ creativities, it was a good idea to ask students to make a video showcasing their conversation or speech and upload it to YouTube. Some suggested, the extra task could be asking the students to watch a video from YouTube and then write the resume or retell the video. Yet, some advised that the extra assignment was not too burdensome for the students. In addition, fifty percent of the students did not see the need for an additional assignment.

The Teaching and Learning Materials of Oracy in Academic Context Course

Teaching and learning materials, according to Farrant (2002), are media or materials used to facilitate learning, for example text books, audio visual aids, software and hardware in educational technology. In this study, Dlt explained that the curriculum document mentioned the topics of discussion that should be included such as aspects of speaking in academic contexts, public speaking, debate, and also listening in conference. It was expected that these activities would guide students to prepare themselves in a variety of speaking and listening situations. Nr said that she presented videos to the students. Re said there was no textbook for her *Oracy* class but she supplied variety of videos. Ne discussed more about the topics she gave to students instead of explaining specific information about the teaching materials given to the

students. Ne dominantly used online videos to prompt her classroom discussions; especially those from native English-speaking countries.

The students explained that they were given teaching materials in the form of videos, modules, books, website links, and handouts. Most of the students maintained that these kinds of materials were suitable for the course. They explained that because the nature of the course is speaking and listening, the use of videos was useful for them to practice their speaking. Most of the students thought that those kind of teaching materials are appropriate. They, once again, emphasised purely the apparent speaking gains as opposed to the communicative learning from videos. Some suggested that the duration of the video should be longer instead of just 2-3 minutes. Three students said that the teaching materials do not suit them because those who had not fully acquired grammatical rules would find it difficult to understand the video. As for the language of the videos, half students stated it accorded with their level; and half the students stated the language of the video was too difficult for them. Some said that videos should be easy enough for the students to follow and, in addition, the speaker volume should also be loud and clear. From the interview it is clear that the lecturers mostly used videos as a teaching and learning resource in the classroom; therefore most students suggested that students needed more books.

Facilities Provided by The University

Dlt acknowledged that the facilities provided by the faculty did not yet support the *Oracy* class. She explained further that if speaking class is limited to sound that come from audio, this is a very conventional idea. She argued that students ought to be expected to produce a project-based outcome such as a communicative video. Thus, a computer lab equipped with multimedia instrument such as video recording camera is required. Speaking and listening are really dependent to technology. Nr said that y there should be a

good library to support the students to look out for resources. Re emphasised more on physical limitations in the *Oracy* class. She asserted that this class needed multimedia equipment such as speakers to support playing the videos. Ne said that, although there was projector available in the classroom used for *Oracy in Academic Context* course, the electricity often went out. She also revealed that the internet connection was glitchy; therefore, it made it hard for them to watch video from You Tube to see conversation practices.

Suggestions to Improve the Quality of Oracy in Academic Context Course

Dlt suggested that the lecturers who teach in *Oracy* class should explore several models of teaching and learning approach. In the end, the lecturers will then review which model will work best for the students. In addition, the department will urge the faculty to provide the facilities that support the *Oracy* class. Nr suggested lecturers needed the skills to know how to push the students to be more confident in presenting the topics given, and to communicate in English. Re suggested that lecturers needed to be flexible towards the topics in the syllabus, and be creative in arranging classroom activities. Re believed that syllabus needed to represent a common guide in the first place and through the semester the lecturers can adjust the activities for the students, for example by giving them work projects. Ne maintained that was really good idea if there were established materials used for the classroom so that all the lecturers who looked after the classes would have the same activities, although it depended on each lecturer's comfort whether to use the materials or not. The students offered some suggestions that might improve the quality of the *Oracy in Academic Context* course. First, there should be a specific book for the coursework. Others suggested that the lecturer's teaching methods and strategies should be improved and students need to do more practice. The rest of the students mentioned that the teaching materials should be amended with

many more interesting videos of current issues or trends.

CONCLUSION

The finding and discussions section has revealed some important aspects that need to be addressed for the construction of the syllabus for the new coursework *Oracy in Academic Context*. First, there need to be clear coursework objectives stated in the syllabus document for both lecturers and students so that they have similar concept about the course. The topics that are currently included in the syllabus need to be revised, considering some are not academic enough such as reviewing food, and certain skills need to be amended such as reporting news and note-taking for lecturer or seminar. Further, the lecturer need to reconsider teaching and method used for the course because it seemed that the lecturers have given too much autonomy to the students to learn independently without proper guidance which is not exactly student-centred learning aims to. Guidance is still needed for the students before they explore their own learning strategies that suit them.

From the interviews it was also revealed that there was almost no materials apart from videos given to the students, therefore there is a demand to provide the future students enrol in this course books or modules that they can use as a part of their learning process. For this coursework to be run optimal, a good internet connection is required, yet at the moment the situation in the university has not yet fully supported the ideal condition. Thus, the lecturer need to think how to anticipate this by downloading the video in advance before play it in the class. Another aspect to be consider is that students need exact scoring rubric to which they can refer to meet lecturer's expectation, as well conduct peer-evaluation and self-evaluation. By analysing viewpoints from the Head of English Department, the lecturers, and the students about the coursework, the researcher gained the comprehensive picture to develop a new syllabus and reconstruct materials for the *Oracy in Academic Context*.

Hopefully, by administering this process as a part of research and development (R & D) process, the new syllabus and the materials developed later will satisfy the necessity, lack, and want of those parties involved.

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