

Literacy Syllabus Evaluation through Needs Analysis of English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract

With its unique and progressive approach on education, Green School High School Literacy Syllabus shall be evaluated from an ESP perspective and there is currently no research about it. The aim of this study is to find out what language skills the students think they need and help determine if the existing syllabus at Green School has adequately addressed the needs using qualitative-quantitative methods. Through questionnaires, this study uses Hutchinson-Water's theory of target needs and learning needs. After careful evaluation, the findings suggest that the syllabus has not addressed the Needs sufficiently. Out of 86 subskills, there are only 38 subskills addressed sufficiently. In this context-specific study, there are several implications to be drawn.

Keywords: syllabus, English for Specific Purposes, needs analysis.

Abstrak

Dengan pendekatannya yang unik dan progresif dalam pendidikan, silabus Literasi SMA Green School harus dievaluasi dari perspektif ESP (Bahasa Inggris Khusus) dan saat ini belum ada penelitian mengenai hal tersebut. Tujuan penelitian ini ialah untuk mengetahui kemampuan bahasa apa saja yang murid-murid rasa mereka butuhkan guna membantu menentukan apakah silabus yang sudah ada di Green School telah cukup memadai dalam memenuhi kebutuhan dengan metode kualitatif-kuantitatif. Melalui kuisioner, penelitian ini menggunakan teori Hutchinson-Waters mengenai target needs dan learning needs. Setelah penilaian seksama, hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa silabus yang ada belum memadai dalam memenuhi kebutuhan. Dari 86 sub indikator kemampuan, hanya 36 di antaranya yang terpenuhi. Dalam konteks penelitian spesifik ini, ada beberapa implikasi yang bisa diambil.

Kata kunci: silabus, Bahasa Inggris Khusus, analisa kebutuhan.

INTRODUCTION

The need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been and still is a major concern. An investigation for further information on ESP issues for effective implementation of ESP, especially in Indonesia, shall be conducted. (Sari, 2018) In the 1960s, ESP practitioners believed their main job

was to teach the technical vocabulary of a given field or profession. (Smoak, 2003) but it is not. ESP should be seen simply as an 'approach' to teaching or an attitude of mind (Anthony, 1997, p.2) Besides, ESP courses are likely to be designed for adult learners but may be organized for learners at the secondary school level. (Dudley-Evans and St John

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in Javid, Choudhary Zahid, 2013, p. 140) The difference between General English and ESP is the learners' awareness of the needs to learn a language. (Ekici, 2003)

A well-written syllabus could provide a doorway into the pedagogical beliefs of the teacher. (Murphy, 2018, p. 1) But what is a syllabus? It is the description of the contents of the program and the order they will be taught. (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 139 & 567) To see whether its objectives are being achieved, so that modifications in them can be made if necessary, an evaluation shall be conducted (White, 1971, p. 101) Supporting that idea, in ESP, it is a needs analysis that determines which language skills are most needed by the learners, and the syllabus is designed accordingly. (Rahman, English for Specific Purposes (ESP): A Holistic Review, 2015, p. 1) Needs Analysis (NA) is the systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum purposes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation. (Brown, 1995, pp. 35-36) On that note, an evaluation of the syllabus through Needs Analysis of an ESP course shall be taken as a part of making an appropriate syllabus for an ESP class.

There have been several pieces of research regarding ESP and Needs Analysis. A study was comparing the needs analysis from the students' point of view and employers' regarding English usage at the workplace. (Chen, Chang, & Chang, 2016) Another work investigated probable mismatch between skills in textbooks and students' perception of the needs. (Zohoorian, 2015) A more recent study investigated students' needs when dealing with and/or using ESP. (Izidi & Zitouni, 2017)

Having developed their own curriculum, Green School High School has 6-week blocks, with students empowered to make their own choices; it focuses on project-based, experiential, service-learning; and educating for sustainability as their program. Students must acquire 4 credits in English classes (Literacy) to receive the Green School High School Diploma. (Green School, 2018) Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. (UNESCO, 2004, p. 13) The syllabus shall be evaluated from an ESP perspective and there is currently no research about it.

This research employed a theory proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) to evaluate the syllabus of Literacy English for Specific Purposes for High School Grade 3 students at Green School Bali. The central aim of this study is to propose an ESP syllabus which would be effective and appropriate to the students' needs.

In the endeavor to reach its goal, this study has two questions to be explored as follows: What are the students' perceptions of their language skills needs?, How does the existing syllabus at Green School address language skills needs?

This study aims to: find out what language skills the students think they need, help determine if the existing syllabus at Green School adequately addresses the needs.

METHOD

In order to conduct the research, several aspects must be prepared, and, in this section, the research methods are introduced in four sections.

Data Source

Data for this research is the existing syllabus of the third grade of high school

of Green School Bali's English class and questionnaires on students' perceptions of what they think they need and a questionnaire on Literacy instructor' perception of what he thinks the students' need. The current number of students in Grade 3 is 37, and to achieve 10% of the population, this study gathered questionnaire responses from 4 student representatives. The questionnaires were conducted through Google Drive. The pilot was conducted from January 30th, 2019 to February 6th, 2019. After some reviews, the actual questionnaire was then conducted from February 14th through February 28th.

Method and Technique of Collecting Data

Quantitative-qualitative methods are used in this study. Several techniques are used: first, obtaining the current syllabus for High School Literacy, then obtaining the alumni profile, next, piloting of the Student Needs Assessment Questionnaire. After reviewing the result, the next step was conducting a Needs Assessment Questionnaire for both the students and the teacher.

Method and Technique of Analysing Data

Since this was a mix of qualitative and quantitative study, the steps of analyzing the data were as follows: first, identifying each data type, classifying data into categories, comparing students' perception with the teacher's, then comparing the findings with the existing syllabus, and lastly, giving recommendations if necessary.

Method and Technique of Presenting Data

This study presents the data taken from the questionnaire and interviews by informal description. Descriptive method was implemented using the following

technique: classifying the types of needs based on the four types of language skills, then classifying the types of skills based on Language Needs Skills and Target Needs Skills, and next was giving the analysis based on the data accordingly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students' Perception of Their Language Needs

a. Reading Language Needs Skills

Subskill	Points
making inferences about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact	15
critically analyzing and making thematic connections to the literary device	17
make connections between elements of style, form, and content	17
assessing the author's intent and the reader's interpretation	18
self-selecting reading strategies to improve comprehension skills	19

Wants for reading for academic needs are self-selecting reading strategies to improve comprehension skills, assessing author's intent and reader's interpretation, critically analyzing and making thematic connections to the literary device, and making connections between elements of style, form, and content. Whereas the Necessities are making inferences about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact, self-selecting reading strategies to improve comprehension skills, critically

analyzing and making thematic connections to the literary device, and making connections between elements of style, form, and content.

b. Writing Language Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact	16
forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content	16
taking the risk in style and structure	13
creatively applying stylistic structure	15
back up original claims	15
communicate ideas effectively	18
self-selecting writing strategies and tools to improve grammar, structure, and style	18
asking critical questions about language and power	18

Wants for writing for academic needs are to communicate ideas effectively, self-selecting writing strategies and tools to improve grammar, structure, and style, asking critical questions about language and power, forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact, and forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content. Whereas all sub-skills are considered Necessities.

c. Speaking Language Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values, embedded in a text, and impact	16
forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content	14
taking the risk in style and structure	14
creatively applying stylistic structure	16
back up original claims	15
communicate ideas effectively	18
asking critical questions about language and power	14
engaging in discussions	20
making presentations	14
criticizing	18

Wants of speaking for academic studies are engaging in discussions, communicating ideas effectively, criticizing, forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact, and lastly creatively applying stylistic structure. The Necessities of speaking for academic studies are backing up original claims, communicating ideas effectively, asking critical questions about language and power, forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact, forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content, engaging in discussions, making presentations, and criticizing.

d. Listening Language Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
obtaining gist	15
obtaining specific information	17
listening for summarizing	14
recognizing how ideas are represented	16
deducing arguments made in debates	16
extracting the information not explicitly stated	15
recognizing the speaker's attitude	17

Wants of listening for academic studies are obtaining specific information, recognizing the speaker's attitude, recognizing how ideas are represented, and deducing arguments made in debates. Necessities of listening for academic studies are all seven subskills.

e. Reading Target Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
academic texts	14
manuals	12
newspapers	13
business letters	13
magazines/periodicals	10
reports	14
maps	17
email messages	17
brochures	11

dictionary entries	15
memos	14
instruction booklets	11
legal documents	19
the agenda of a meeting	15
the minutes of a meeting	12
newsletter	12
catalogs	10

Wants are reading legal documents, reading maps, and reading email messages. All reading sub-skills are regarded as Necessities for target situation.

f. Writing Target Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
business letters	15
memos	14
minutes	14
agendas	13
notices	13
email messages	17
notes	13
reports	15
itineraries	12
commentaries	11
legal documents	18
user manuals	12
brochures	12
leaflets	13

Wants are writing legal documents and writing e-mail messages. All writing sub-skills are regarded as Necessities for target situation.

g. Speaking Target Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
with native speakers	16
with non-native speakers	16
with teachers/lecturers	18
with colleagues	17
with customers/clients	12
with government officials	16
in the office	15
in court	20
in science labs	15
at the airports	16
in transportation contexts	16
in social settings	16

Wants for speaking for target situation are speaking in court, speaking with teachers/lecturers, speaking with colleagues, speaking with government officials, speaking at the airport, speaking in transportation contexts, and speaking in social settings. All speaking sub-skills are regarded as Necessities for target situation.

h. Listening Target Needs Skills

Subskills	Points
native speakers	17
non-native speakers	18
the radio	14
TV programs	11
announcements at different places	13
films	13
presentations	15
meetings	19
conferences	19
seminars	16
discussions	20
conversations on the phone	18
face-to-face conversations	19

Wants for listening for target situation are listening to discussions, listening to meetings, listening to conferences, listening to face-to-face conversations, listening to non-native speakers, listening to conversations on the phone, listening to native speakers, and listening to seminars. All listening sub-skills are regarded as Necessities for target situations.

How the Curriculum Addresses the Students' Language Needs

a. Reading Language Needs

Subskill	Points
making inferences about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact	14
critically analyzing and making thematic connections to the literary device	11
make connections between elements of style, form, and content	11
assessing the author's intent and the reader's interpretation	14
self-selecting reading strategies to improve comprehension skills	14

The students are most proficient in making inferences about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact, assessing author's intent and reader's interpretation, and self-selecting reading strategies to improve comprehension skills compared to the other two sub-skills among five of them. After looking at the Wants, the Necessities, and the students' perception of their proficiency, for reading for academic needs, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently. The Lacks are critically analyzing and making thematic connections to literary device and making connections between elements of style, form, and content.

b. Writing Language Needs

Subskills	Points
forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact	15
forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content	13
taking the risk in style and structure	11
creatively applying stylistic structure	11
back up original claims	12
communicate ideas effectively	11
self-selecting writing strategies and tools to improve grammar, structure, and style	13
asking critical questions about language and power	13

The students are most proficient in forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values embedded in a text, and impact. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for writing for academic needs, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently yet. The Lacks are forming questions on connection between elements of style, form, and content, taking risk in style and structure, creatively applying stylistic structure, backing up original claims, communicating ideas effectively, self-selecting writing strategies and tools to improve grammar, structure, and style, and lastly, asking critical questions about language and power.

c. Speaking Language Needs

Subskills	Points
forming critical questions about voice, purpose, values, embedded in a text, and impact	16
forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content	13
taking the risk in style and structure	14
creatively applying stylistic structure	14
back up original claims	15
communicate ideas effectively	16
asking critical questions about language and power	14
engaging in discussions	19
making presentations	17
criticizing	17

The students are most proficient in engaging in discussions. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for speaking for academic needs, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently yet. Even though five of the Necessities seemed to be addressed sufficiently, the students have not felt proficient enough in backing up original claims, asking critical questions about language and power, and in forming questions on connections between elements of style, form, and content. The Lacks are then backing up original claims, asking critical questions about language and power, and informing questions on

connections between elements of style, form, and content.

d. Listening Language Needs

Subskills	Points
obtaining gist	18
obtaining specific information	16
listening for summarizing	16
recognizing how ideas are represented	17
deducing arguments made in debates	17
extracting the information not explicitly stated	17
recognizing the speaker's attitude	14

The students are most proficient in engaging in discussions. After looking at the Necessities and

the students' perception of their proficiency, for listening for academic needs, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently yet. There is only one Necessity that has not been properly addressed, which is recognizing the speaker's attitude. Lack is then recognizing the speaker's attitude.

e. Reading Target Needs

Subskills	Points
academic texts	13
manuals	14
newspapers	10
business letters	11
magazines/periodicals	11

reports	13
maps	14
email messages	14
brochures	11
dictionary entries	14
memos	15
instruction booklets	10
legal documents	11
the agenda of a meeting	10
the minutes of a meeting	12
newsletter	13
catalogues	10

The students are most proficient in reading memos. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for reading for target situation, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently yet. There is only one Necessity seemed to be addressed sufficiently, reading memos. The students have not felt proficient enough in sixteen subskills. The Lacks are reading academic texts, reading manuals, reading newspapers, reading business letters, reading magazines/periodicals, reading reports, reading maps, reading email messages, reading brochures, reading dictionary entries, reading instruction booklets, reading legal documents, reading the agenda of a meeting, reading the minutes of a meeting, reading newsletter, and in reading catalogues.

f. Writing Target Needs

Subskills	Points
business letters	12
memos	11
minutes	13
agendas	10
notices	12
email messages	14
notes	13
reports	15
itineraries	9
commentaries	12
legal documents	11
user manuals	12
brochures	11
leaflets	12

The students are most proficient in writing reports. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for writing for target situation, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently yet. Even though writing reports seemed to be addressed sufficiently, the students have not felt proficient enough in the rest fifteen subskills. The Lacks are writing business letters, writing memos, writing minutes, writing agendas, writing notices, writing email messages, writing notes, writing itineraries, writing commentaries, writing legal documents, writing user manuals, writing brochures, and writing leaflets.

g. Speaking Target Needs

Subskills	Points
with native speakers	16
with non-native speakers	17
with teachers/lecturers	18
with colleagues	17
with customers/clients	18
with government officials	13
in the office	14
in court	13
in science labs	13
at the airports	15
in transportation contexts	17
in social settings	17

The students are most proficient in speaking with teachers/lecturers. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for speaking for target situation, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently just yet. Even though seven out of twelve Necessities seemed to be addressed already sufficiently, the students have not felt proficient enough in five subskills. The Lacks are then speaking with government officials, speaking in the office, speaking in court, speaking in science labs, and speaking at the airports.

h. Listening Target Needs

Subskills	Points
native speakers	19
non-native speakers	19
the radio	17
TV programs	18
announcements at different places	14
films	16
presentations	17
meetings	16
conferences	18
seminars	16
discussions	19
conversations on the phone	17
face-to-face conversations	17

The students are equally most proficient in listening to native speakers, listening to non-native speakers, and listening to discussions. After looking at the Necessities and the students' perception of their proficiency, for listening for the target situation, the syllabus has not addressed it sufficiently just yet. Even though there is only one subskill seemed to be not addressed sufficiently. Lack is listening to announcements at different places.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the findings of the questionnaires suggest that the syllabus has not addressed the Needs sufficiently. Out of 86 subskills, there are only 38 sub-skills addressed sufficiently. The Needs Analysis should have the aim of informing and be able to inform decision-

making on all other aspects of syllabus development, including the resetting and adjustment of its objectives and aims if needed. While this study is highly context-specific, broader implications can be drawn from it before introducing those related to the immediate context. One implication is the importance of conducting a needs analysis prior to teaching a class. Another implication could be selecting the objectives for a focused set of definite, realistic aims.

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