

ANALYZING EFL LEARNERS' NEEDS FOR VOCABULARY LEARNING MATERIALS

Yudi Basuki, Astried Damayanti, Sri Utami Dewi

STKIP PGRI TRENGGALEK

Email: jude.q13@gmail.com, astried.damayanti@yahoo.co.id,
muthiaded@gmail.com

Jl. Supriyadi 22 KP. 66319 Trenggalek

Abstrak: Kosakata sangatlah penting, karena kosakata merupakan inti dari kompleksitas bahasa dan sebagai titik awal bagi mereka yang akan belajar bahasa baru. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kebutuhan pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris. Identifikasi kebutuhan peserta didik dalam pembelajaran kosa kata bahasa Inggris dilakukan kepada seluruh mahasiswa aktif jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP PGRI Trenggalek dengan menggunakan *open-closed* kuesioner. Berdasarkan hasil analisis data, ditemukan sejumlah target dan kebutuhan belajar krusial mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris dalam belajar kosakata Bahasa Inggris yang mana kebutuhan materi itu telah diurutkan sesuai dengan kompleksitas, kedalaman, prasarat dan relevansinya yaitu; kelas/jenis kata, morphemes, affixation, word families, collocations, synonym and antonym, homophone and homograph, word in comparison, punctuations, forming new words (blending, compounding, clipping, acronym), phrases, idioms dan sebuah materi khusus tentang strategies of vocabulary learning. Sebagai tambahan, kesemua materi tersebut diperlukan untuk disajikan secara kontekstual dalam kehidupan terdekat pembelajar, bermakna dan dalam kenyataan penggunaannya.

Kata kunci: kebutuhan peserta didik, materi pembelajaran, kosakata

Abstract: Vocabulary is important; it is as the core of language complexities and as a starting point of those who are learning a new language. The purpose of this study was to identify the EFL learners' needs for learning English vocabulary. The identification of learners' needs was conducted to all active students of English Language education studying program of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek. It used the open-closed questionnaire. Research findings of analyzed data found a number of the students' crucial target and learning needs for vocabulary learning which was ordered with its complexity, depth, prerequisite and relevancy such as; part of speech, morphemes, affixation, word families, collocations, synonym and antonym, homophone and homograph, word in comparison, punctuations, forming new words (blending, compounding, clipping, acronym), phrases, idioms and a special material of strategies of vocabulary learning. In addition, all mentioned materials were needed to be presented in a contextual, meaningful and useful way.

Keywords: learners' needs, learning material, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Basuki (2017, p.17) argues that "vocabulary is very important; it is as the core of language complexities and as a starting point of those who are learning a new language". Further, he adds that "we have to believe that learner who wants to improve his or her language she/he will get the most improvement if she/he learns more words and expressions than other language components". Meanwhile, in higher education setting of

English language education studying program in Indonesia, teaching-learning English words has been done for the students learning English in EFL context as Vocabulary subjects. However, the needs of the students for vocabulary learning materials have not been figured yet. An abundance of books/textbooks/workbooks of vocabulary today offer the general material of vocabulary and mostly do not accommodate what needs of college students of English language education studying program of STKIP-PGRI Trenggalek.

Thus, in determining vocabulary materials for EFL learners such as the ones for English Language education studying program learners, it is, of course, necessary to determine the English materials that emphasize on learners' needs. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the material is the first component of the level of design in the instructional system. Furthermore, they claim that it deals with how learners are expected to learn in the system and with how teachers are expected to teach with respect to a particular set of instructional materials organized according to the criteria of a syllabus. In line with their statement, Dick and Carey (1985) mention that in order to have effective instructional materials, there must be a match between learners and materials.

Based on Richards (1990), there are three purposes of doing needs analysis. The first is providing a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design, and implementation of language programs through involving such people as learners, teachers, administrators, and employers in the process. The second, identifying specific language needs that can be addressed in developing objectives and content for a language program becomes the second purpose. The last is providing data that can serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluating an existing program. It can be concluded that doing needs survey is very beneficial.

In general, terms, need analysis (also called need assessment) refers to the activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing some materials that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students (Brown, 1995). Needs analysis (in the formal and technical sense) is relatively new in language teaching circles. However, needs analysis has been conducted informally for years by teachers who wanted to assess what language points their students needed to learn. In an addition, Richards, Platt, and Weber defined Need analysis as the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs accord.

Given the background, i.e the lack of suitable vocabulary learning materials relevant to the learners' needs of the EFL learners, this study will, of course, be primarily conducted on that basis. In other words, the primary purpose of this study is to gather

information about the needs of EFL learners toward the vocabulary learning materials. This study is limited to English Language education studying program students of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek, both students who have and do not have experienced in learning English to elicit some information on their needs. Based on the discussion above, the question is formulated as follows: What are the needs of EFL learners toward vocabulary learning materials? Then, the results of this survey will function as the main data for determining suitable vocabulary learning material. Therefore, the needs analysis process does not end in itself.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Vocabulary

Vygotsky in Thornbury (2008, p.1) states that vocabulary is "A word is a microcosm of human consciousness". Thus, vocabulary is words that exist in every language or subject as a small part which has the same characteristics as something much larger.

Further, vocabulary is seen as an important component of language. Wilkins in Thornbury (2008, p.13) strictly argues that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed". In addition, Allen (1983:1) states,

Experience teacher of English as a second language know very well how important vocabulary is. They know learners must learn thousands of words that speakers and researchers of English use. Fortunately, the need for vocabulary is one point on which teachers and learners agree!

However, learning vocabulary does not seem as simple as such way. The vocabulary materials must be selectively chosen. Whether it is to acquire a specific and/or general target of language learning or others. In addition, Thornbury (2008, p.13) argues that "vocabulary teaching has not always been very responsive to such problems and the teachers have not fully recognized the tremendous communicative advantage in developing an extensive vocabulary". Despite all considerations of vocabulary materials that the learners should learn, Thornbury (2008, p.106) headlines two major vocabulary materials to teach; word parts and word chunks, that cover some vocabulary materials such word formation (affixation), word combination (compounding, phrase, conversion), a lexical approach, lexical chunks, word grammar, phrasal verb, idioms, and etc.

Teaching and Learning Material for EFL College Learners based on Learners Needs

College can simply mean "any place for specialized education after the age of 16 where people research or train to get knowledge and/or skills" (Walter et.al 2008). Meanwhile, Webster (1989) defines college as "a school in the U.S. that you go to after high school: a school that offers course leading to a degree (such as a bachelor's degree of an associate's degree)". Thus, college is any school for specialized education after the

age of 16 or after finishing high school to train people to get knowledge/skill and to lead to a certain degree.

Accordingly, college learners are people who study at a school for specialized education after the age of 16 or after finishing high school to train themselves to get knowledge/skill and to lead to a certain degree. Siregar in Hidayah (2012:4) notifies that college learners are members of society who have some characteristics as follows; first, college learners have ability and opportunity to research in college or university then they can be categorized as intellectuals. Second, in the future college learners are expected to be able to be a skillful leader, whether leader in society or workplace. Third, college learners are expected to be able to be a dynamic motivator for modernization process. Fourth, college learners are expected to be able to get a job as a qualified and professional employee.

Meanwhile, to achieve those expectations of college learners 'characteristics above henceforth they must be well educated in college. Especially in Indonesia, the college education is based on college curriculum which is based on the Indonesian national qualification framework (KKNI) cited as Indonesian minister of education decree number 49 the year 2014. Meanwhile, a curriculum is a set of plan and regulation about learning outcome, learning material, process, and assessment which is used as the guidance to running the majority of college or university. Further, Indonesian minister of education decree number 49 year 2014 outlines that the College National Standard (SNPT) in chapter II (national education standard) covers some aspects of college education standard such as graduation competence standard, learning content standard, learning process standard, learning assessment standard, teacher and apparatus standard, and utilities standard. Those standards rule the education standard of any colleges or universities in Indonesia and any colleges or universities must obey the rule. Dealing with teaching material as the learning source, Harmer (2007, p.277) defines "learning resources as any items (dictionaries, worksheets, supplementary books, DVDs, etc.) which both teachers and learners can use to learn in class". Meanwhile, Richard (2001, p.208) highlights that "English teacher needs access to a good range of current textbooks, resource books, or materials in order to update their professional knowledge and get new ideas to feed into their teaching". Thus, it is noteworthy that appropriate materials as learning source must be well prepared by the teachers in order to promote learning.

Moreover, definitions of needs vary depending on the purpose of the analysis, but all take the learner as a focus of analysis. Lawson (1979) defines *need* as 'something that is recognized' but it is not in any sense *discovered*, and its *existence* derives from

whatever criteria are thought to be relevant in making the diagnoses. This implies that in order to recognize *need* one would have to carry out some kind of assessment or evaluation of the existing situation and the diagnosis of assessment results would reveal some deficiency. Further, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) make a distinction between 'target needs' and 'learning needs'. The target need refers to what the learner needs to do in the target situation and the learning need refers to what the learner needs to do in order to learn. They further subcategorized target needs into (1) necessities: what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation, (2) lacks: the discrepancy between necessity and what the learner already knows, (3) wants: what the learner actually wants to learn or what he/she feels he/she needs. The learner's *wants* may or may not conform to those perceived by the teachers or course designers. The learning need is equated to the route of learning. This concerns things such as how learners learn the language, why they learn it, what resources are available to help them learn.

Previous Study

Dewi (2015) in her attempt to define the VHS syllabus design and students' needs based on ESP approach proved that an essential point that considerably needs to be noticed is that the English syllabus, which was taught at SMK Negeri Pogalan Trenggalek in the 2013/2014 academic year, was not based upon students' real needs. In contrary, the present research is merely aimed to figure out what the needs of the students on learning then it could be used as the basis of material and syllabus designing. Meanwhile, Ulum (2015) in his research entitled "A Needs Analysis Study for Preparatory Class ELT Students" focused on the needs of the preparatory class ELT students in the speaking course resulted from the analysis that the overall perception of the participants as to the efficiency of the program is adequate. However, a number of the respondents have declared that they should do various interesting activities based on more speaking practices to provide interactive participation. In language learning, the most required skill is speaking. So, instructors should do their best to supply learners with the best speaking practices needed. The aim of a speaking class should stimulate the learning of communication skills and promote authentic communication in and out of the classroom setting. Similarly, the present study tries to figure out what the respondents' (students) perceptions toward their needs for vocabulary learning. The distinctions lie on the subject matter of the course which the materials had been given to the students and the present study focuses on the students of higher education in EFL setting.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Method is an essential part of a descriptive study which is aimed at analyzing the learners' needs toward vocabulary learning materials. The survey method is frequently used to collect descriptive data (Borg & Gall, 1983). They stated further that surveys are used simply to collect information. The aim of using the survey method is to get the fullest and most authentic description of the field of study. English Language education studying program students were chosen since it is a new department in STKIP PGRI Trenggalek. The learning materials were still insufficient in this department, especially for vocabulary subject.

The subject of this study was taken from all active students of English Language education studying program. The total number of the population was 91 students, and all students were present. The instrument for collecting the data about the learners' needs toward vocabulary learning material was a questionnaire. In developing the questionnaire, the researchers referred to factual information gathered from the researchers' observation. The questionnaire consisted of items regarding English instruction and what the students need from that instruction.

The questionnaire consisted of closed-open questions with yes or no option and followed by students' reason for their option. The questions asked in this study were about their needs dealing with vocabulary learning materials. The respondents answered the questionnaire in their classroom accompanied by their vocabulary lecturer. Then, their responses to the questionnaires were classified, ordered and analyzed to know their real needs. The data were analyzed descriptively based on the percentage of the students' responses toward the researcher's questionnaire. As a whole, the data were used to determine vocabulary learning materials.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings on the target and learning need analysis of the students based on the questionnaire implemented highlighted some findings as follows

Table 1. Finding on students' questionnaire on vocabulary target and learning material needs

<i>Finding on Students' Questionnaire on Vocabulary Material</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 98% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of part of speech • Nearly 96% of students needed to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of morphemes • Nearly 95% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of affixation • Nearly 92% of students needed to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of collocation • Nearly 90% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of word stalks (synonym, antonym, homophone and homograph) • Nearly 90% of students needed to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of words in comparison • Nearly 86% of students needed to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of punctuations • Nearly 85% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of phrases • Nearly 83% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of forming new words including coining, blending, compounding and acronym • Nearly 81% of students expected to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of English idioms • More than 80% of students needed sufficient strategies/techniques to study and preserve vocabularies for further language's skill developments • Most students wanted to have content of the material presented contextually, usefully and meaningfully
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Table 2. The students' top reasons for vocabulary target and learning material need

<i>The students' top reasons for vocabulary material</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 97% of students argued that vocabulary is a new course and it is the basic language that must be mastered • Nearly 96% of students argued that vocabulary is important to be taught for students majoring in ability to listen and speak and read and write English later • Nearly 95% of students argued that It is important to know and understand and to be able to properly use the vocabularies that we meet most often and we use every day in the students' contexts to be considered as a learning materials • Nearly 95% of students argued that It is a must to start the vocabulary learning with the easiest material to the most complex one • Nearly 90% of students argued that It is a need to have a good grounding in theoretical and practical knowledge of vocabulary • Nearly 85% of students argued that if there is a vocabulary book that matches the competency level achieved, student learning needs, and student interest will help students learn vocabulary
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Thus, as the need of students on target and learning vocabulary had been found, then it could be taken as the basis of material selection and development of vocabulary that was sufficed by theoretical and practical knowledge of vocabulary including the material of part of speech, morphemes, affixation, collocation, word stalks, word formation, word in comparison, punctuations, word (noun) in phrase, and word with figurative meaning that meet the target of vocabulary study which is presented systematically in contextual, meaningful and useful way.

Discussion

Based on the findings concerning to the target need, it was found out that the students need the vocabulary mastery due to the demand of the target situation to study, that is, vocabulary becomes the compulsory subject for English Language education studying program of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek. The students realize that the learning materials in the form of part of speech, morphemes, affixation, collocation, word stalks, word formation, word in comparison, punctuations, word (noun) in a phrase, and word with figurative meaning were merely needed to help them studying vocabulary. These are in line with Thornbury (2008:106) who headlines two major vocabulary materials to teach; word parts and word chunks, that cover some vocabulary materials such word formation (affixation), word combination (compounding, phrase, conversion), a lexical approach, lexical chunks, word grammar, phrasal verb, idioms, and etc

Related to the learning needs, the findings proved that almost all of the respondents need the materials relevant to their needs to study. The research shows that the students still have difficulties in mastering vocabulary although they have already taken any other vocabulary lesson. They hope that the materials for the next vocabulary lesson can help them in mastering English especially can support their language skills. So, they hope there is a relevant vocabulary book that matches the competency level achieved, student learning needs. Multiple choices, matching, puzzle and essay are suggested methods of evaluation to measure their understanding of the materials. In terms of the material, they stated that the combination of material and evaluation should be balanced to make them more interested to study. At last, the space for students' feedback was also needed to explore their experience after studying the book.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The results of this study will surely help to shape the selection and development of materials, teaching strategies, and evaluation method. Based on the results of data analysis, the most dominant needs of the learners, it seems that the students of English Language education studying program of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek needed the vocabulary learning materials on their study. A number of the students' crucial target and learning needs for vocabulary learning which was ordered with its complexity, depth, prerequisite and relevancy resulted learning materials such as; part of speech, morphemes, affixation, word families, collocations, synonym and antonym, homophone and homograph, word in comparison, punctuations, forming new words (blending, compounding, clipping, acronym), phrases, idioms and a special material of strategies of vocabulary learning. In addition, all mentioned materials were needed to be presented in a contextual, meaningful and useful way. Therefore, needs should be seen as an indispensable aspect of syllabus design in order to link the present learners' academic needs with their needs in studying their further subjects.

Suggestion

This research offers several suggestions for some parties. For teachers, it is really urgent for them to be more familiar with the needs of the learners, so that the students can enjoy materials that teachers give. The vocabulary learning materials should be based on the learners' needs in which materials are relevant to their expectation to study. Teachers have to develop their vocabulary learning materials in order to fulfill the learners' interest. For the learners, it is suggestive to have positive attitude toward English vocabulary to increase their knowledge and proficiency in English.

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