



Students' Needs Analysis in Learning General English A Case at A German Education Study Program

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ABSTRACT

It is a fact that general English material is mostly dominated by materials such as daily conversation, tenses or grammar, vocabulary, and some of language expressions, like asking permission, apologizing, asking direction, and giving suggestion. Nevertheless, some questions may arise regarding the needs for general English especially for non-English department students, like students in German department. The study aims at investigating German department students in a public university in Indonesia on their needs in learning General English. In this qualitative study, 17 student participants were asked to complete a semi-open questionnaire written in Indonesian. The students had completed with their English subject in the German language education study program. The findings highlighted learners' necessities, problems they faced, and their wants and needs in learning English. It is suggested that an appropriate textbook that fits their needs can be developed a learning material source in their English class. It is expected that curriculum developers will not only focus on producing good curricula, but also paying attention to the students' needs after they graduate.

Keywords: *English curriculum, English for general purposes, Higher education, Needs analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Needs analysis, also called as a needs assessment (Brown, 1995, p. 35) is the first step that must be done in designing a program and aims to find out the needs of students so that the assessment can determine the goals and contents of a program or a subject (Richards, 2001; Nation & Macalister, 2010). Needs analysis assists to draw a profile of students or course in order to determine and prioritize the needs for which students require English (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Ürün and Yazar (2015) asserted that the needs analysis is a crucial means in conducting research prior to design and evaluate lessons, or materials, or syllabus. The needs analysis is classified into target needs (necessities, lacks, and wants) and learning needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The current study adopts this classification by Hutchinson and Waters as the framework.

Research on the needs analysis of non-English students in learning English has been widely carried out in Indonesia, both in designing an English language program and learning general English at universities in Indonesia. Jamilah (2016) conducted a needs analysis study on non-English major students at Yogyakarta State University whose research subjects were non-language learners. She opined that learning needs relate to what

students really need to do in the learning process of English. While needs assessment is the process for identifying learners' needs that must be addressed in designing a curriculum, in this case, an appropriate English general textbook. Thus, it can be inferred that a needs analysis or assessment is a prerequisite to design learning activities tailored to students' interests and ways of learning. The results of needs analysis can also avoid or minimize problems that will occur in the teaching and learning process and provide an overview to the lecturer to aid the students solving their difficulties. By obtaining information about the student needs, it will be easier for lecturers or material developers to easily and quickly transfer the English material so that students will also easily and quickly absorb and internalize the material.

Arjulayana (2018) conducted a study on non-English learners' needs that the participants were also non-language learners. While the current study focuses on the language students of German Language Education at Pattimura University in Ambon city, this research is considered significant because the results of this study will be useful for the researcher to design a general English textbook that can be used by these students. As an attempt to add to the discussion of the importance of general English for non-English department students, this study aims to analyze the needs of teaching materials for

students in the German language education study program. Besides, the study identifies students' problems in learning English and explores activities that match their needs.

2. METHOD

This qualitative descriptive method used semi-open questionnaire for data collection. This type of questionnaire provides an opportunity for participants to fill out and give response that really fits their condition without depending on the available choices. The questionnaire is adopted from previous research employing Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) classification of needs analysis. There were seventeen (17) questions covering students' needs in learning general English subject, namely: their necessity, lacks, and wants and needs. Items 1 to 4 explore the students' necessities, items 5 to 8 explore students' lacks/difficulties/problems, and items 9 to 17 explore students' wants and needs. The detailed questions will be explained in the findings and discussion part.

Seventeen participants coming from the German Language Education Study Program in Pattimura university in Ambon city involved in this study. The participants were selected based on convenience and purposive sampling because they were easily accessible by the researchers, and they were non-English learners. Wan (2019) argued that convenience sampling is a method in which that study units are recruited for convenient sake, as the subjects happen to be available at the time of data collection. The respondents were aware of the purpose of this study, and their approval in participating in the study was confirmed.

The questionnaire was written in Indonesian including the instruction, and distributed to the respondents on Wednesday, July 21st 2021, and then submitted during 10 days. The data was analysed descriptively to portray the needs of students in learning general English.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented based on the themes from the questionnaire, which include learners' necessities, lacks, perceptions, and wants and needs.

3.1. Learners' Necessities

Table 1 shows that there are several topics needed by the non-English learners, namely: education, culture, teenager, but the most needed topic is daily life. The learners need this topic the most because it is talking about their daily activities that they experience it every day. It will be easier to talk or discuss about daily experience. The most needed text type is News item. This makes a lot of sense because it aligns with their needs for

Table 1. Learners' necessities

No	Learners' necessities	Response	%
1	The topic I need the most	Daily Life Education Culture Teenager	64.7 23.5 5.8 5.8
2	Text type I need the most	News items Anecdote	70.6 29.4
3	The English material I need the most	Public speaking	100
4	Additional materials I need in learning English	Learn to write a CV Nothing more	94.1 5.9

daily life topics. News item is a text that informs readers or audiences about events of the day. The events are newsworthy or crucial. Thus, when there is a vital event, it should be known by people, then this event deserves news. The news text is called the news item text. News can be read and watched as well. A news item text is ordered systematically and consists of newsworthy event, background events, and sources (Risani, 2020), thus, learners will easily follow it.

There are many benefits of using news to learn a foreign language argued by Lewis (2022). First, news is a never-ending resource. Most news sites are updated throughout the day. Students will never run out of current content that can frequently practice building upon their learning. Second, there is no slang/colloquialism since the journalists are required to write in a standardized way, so students can easily understand the language. Third, TV news is delivered in standard dialect. It is good for beginners who need to know they are learning the correct form of the language. Fourth, anchors and journalists tend to speak clearly that is ideal for both beginners and intermediate students. Likewise, print news tends to be well-written with appropriate and correct use of grammar. Fifth, since news enriches students mind culturally, they are also learning important details about the countries in which the language is spoken. Sixth, news is available via myriads resources, thus it can be utilized to bolster students' reading, listening, and speaking skills. That is a triple win. Seventh, it is also easily accessible. Learners can access the news from wherever they are, in which country of their choice. Considering the numerous benefits of learning using news items, it is not surprising that the study participants need news item text the most.

Material that studies participants need the most is public speaking. They need it the most for various reasons, for instance: some of them said that they need this kind of material to prepare themselves to talk and teaching in front of many people or at least in front of their future students. Some of them also opined that they will have more practice to train their confidence. In fact, there are four essential goals of public speaking, namely: to inform, persuade, entertain the audience, and celebrate

or commemorate a person, occasion, or event (Lumen, n.d.). Thus, public speaking is vital in communication. This skill is crucial for a teacher or lecturer and everybody, in case of discussion, etc.

However, almost all of the participants need to learn how to write a curriculum vitae (CV) in English for some reasons, namely: they will need it when they are going to apply a good job in the future. There is only 1 learner who said that she will not need it since she is studying now as a German Study Program student who will be a German teacher not an English one in the future. She may forget that a CV can be written in English since it is an international language that will be utilized by people in the world. The knowledge of writing a CV is imperative not only for English education study program students, but also whoever who wants to apply and get a great job in a great office or company. A CV shows someone's skills, education, and experience that she/he gained throughout career. Thus, in the future when students want to apply a job, they need good language skill in expressing their ability.

The discussion of learners' necessities above infers that the study participants really need topic about the concrete things such as daily life and news items. They also need knowledge that relates with English for their future, such as: public speaking material and writing a CV in English. They concern with their future.

3.2. Learners' Lacks

Table 2 portrays the learners' problems or difficulties in mastering the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Their responses demonstrate that their biggest problem in learning English skills is lack of vocabulary with various reasons and consequences. Since they lack vocabulary in listening skill, the study participants opined that the native speakers speak too fast. That is why the learners need to enrich their vocabulary by listening to English conversation, and make it a good habit, so they will get used to it and are able to distinguish homophones that is words that have the same pronunciation but different in meaning.

Since the learners are less of practicing English speaking, they feel worried of making mistake in structuring correct sentences and worry of mispronouncing words, and then make them feel less of confidence to speak English. Less of practice is also one of the obstacles in learning English, therefore the non-English learners should be given more time in class to practice speaking Mahanani (2017). 2 or 3 credits are not enough for them in learning English only in one semester. Since the study participants are lack of vocabulary, they do not like reading long texts, and make them rarely read the English texts because they are afraid of mispronouncing words. Meanwhile in writing skill, learners are also lack of vocabulary, have poor

Table 2. Learners' lacks

No	Learners' lacks	Response	Reason/consequence
1	My biggest difficulty in learning Listening Skill	1. Lack of vocabulary 2. Same pronounce, different meaning	1. Native speakers speak so fast 2. Rarely listen to English conversation
2	My biggest difficulty in learning Speaking Skill	1. Lack of vocabulary 2. Rarely practice	1. Feel worry of making mistake in structuring correct sentence 2. Feel worry of mispronouncing words 3. Less of confidence to speak English
3	My biggest difficulty in learning Reading Skill	1. Lack of vocabulary 2. Dislike reading long text	1. Rarely read English text 2. Afraid of mispronouncing words
4	My biggest difficulty in learning Writing Skill	1. Lack of vocabulary 2. Poor knowledge of grammar 3. Have no idea in writing session	Rarely write in English

knowledge of grammar, and sometimes they do not have idea in writing session. Because of the lacks, the study participants rarely write in English. The discussion about learners' lacks reveals that when the learners are lack of vocabulary, other problems will occur and affect their English learning in listening, speaking, reading, and also writing skill. A study conducted by Mahanani (2017) proved that even the non-English learners have enough vocabularies, they are still difficult to memorize and lead them fear of making mistakes. However, more practice will improve learners English.

3.3. Learners' Wants and Needs

Table 3 summarizes the non-English learners' wants and needs in learning English. In the grammar learning activity, most of the study participants want to learn grammar and structure through learning its pattern directly because it is easy to remember. Yet, some of them enjoy grammar activity through taking sentence from a text that is read at the time and then determine the structure or pattern of the sentence. It is more interesting for them. In learning English vocabulary, the learners want to learn vocabulary from English songs/videos provided by the lecturer, so they can practice pronouncing it correctly, and discuss how to create other

Table 3. Learners' wants and needs

No	Learners' wants and needs	Response & %	Reason
1	The grammar learning activity that I want	1. Directly learn grammar and structure through its pattern (88.2) 2. Take sentence from a text, then determine the structure (11.8)	1. Easy to remember 2. More interesting
2	The vocabulary learning activity that I want	Lecturer provides a list of vocabulary started from the easiest to most difficult with image or picture (41.2) Learn from the English song (58.8)	More enjoyable, easy to know and remember
3	When I mispronounce a word in English, I want the lecturer to ...	1. Correct it after the presentation (82.3) 2. Correct it at the time of speaking (17.7)	1. Not disturb the concentration 2. It will not be forgotten
4	Listening activity that I need the most	Feeling/completing words during listening to a song/poem/short story, and then write its significance with the learners' own language (100)	Simpler, easier, and more enjoyable
5	Speaking activity that I need the most	1. Role play (88.2) 2. Debate (5.9) 3. Discussion (5.9)	1. Enjoy to be someone else 2. Can practice English in formal language 3. Can practice English with friends
6	Reading activity that I need the most	Reading text that suits their interests (100)	More enjoyable
7	Writing activity that I need the most	1. Freewriting (88.2) 2. Write a simple poem or short story (11.8)	1. No rules 2. Can express the feeling into a simple work
8	Learning style	1. In group (70.5) 2. Individual (29.5)	1. Share ideas 2. Saving much time and avoid more talk
9	The textbook I need must be full of colors and pictures	1. Yes, more picture and colors (76.4) 2. Yes, a few images (23.6)	1. More interesting 2. More content

sentence from those sentences in the songs/videos. This response is the same with the response of non-English learners in Yogyakarta State University where the learners like to listen to the English songs to learn vocabulary (Jamilah, 2016). Song can elevate the learners' soul. The study participants want the lecturer to provide a list of vocabulary started from the easiest to the most difficult with image or picture. It is more enjoyable, easy to know and remember.

When the non-English learners mispronounce an English word, most of them want the lecturer to correct it after the presentation so their concentration is not disturbed, yet there are still some of them want to be corrected at the time of speaking because it will not be forgotten. Correcting mispronouncing must be done carefully. This relates to students' concentration when they are presenting something orally. To find out this is going true or false, lecturer can approach them and ask their preference to avoid concentration destruction, or mistreatment.

Listening activity that the non-English learners need the most is filling or completing some words that are omitted by the lecturer on purpose during listening to a song/poem/short story via CD or tape recorder, and then write the significance of it with their own language. It means that most respondents more enjoy filling or completing activity in listening to a song/poem/short story for it is simple and easy to do. The point here is they need a media such as song/poem/short story via CD/tape recorder in mastering listening skill. Listening skill is an ability someone gets from birth, and it can also be trained. Learners' vocabulary can increase when they listen to a song/poem/short story via a CD.

Speaking activity that the learners need the most is role play. Role play forces students to speak and memorize English conversation in classroom. It also trains their pronunciation if they practice it more. Chaney and Burke (1998) argued that speaking is a language skill of oral communication to express human idea, feeling, option, and thought or information that assists people to communicate one to another. Meanwhile, role play is significant in teaching speaking since it gives learners fortuity to practice communication in different social context and in different social roles. It also allows learners to be creative and to put themselves in another person's place for a while. Based on the researcher's experience in teaching speaking skill, the role play would seem to be the ideal activity in which learners could use their English creatively and stimulate a conversation situation in which they have chance to practice and develop their communication skill. Yet, there are still some of them need debate and discussion for speaking activity because they can practice their English in formal language in debate session, and practice with friends in classroom discussion.

Reading activity that the study participants need the most is lecturer gives a text that really fits their interest. It is believed that when the learners read something that they interested in, they will enjoy it. Meanwhile, writing activity that the participants need the most is freewriting. Freewriting is the practice of writing down all students' thought without stopping, and without regard for spelling, grammar, or any of the usual rules for writing (Grell, 2021). However, as teacher, we must control them and motivate them to write in a good way slowly but sure. Some participants also like to write a simple literary work such as; poem and short story because they can express their feeling into a simple work.

Most of the non-English learners prefer to study in group of 3 to 5 people to share ideas, and there are some of them prefer to learn independently for saving much time and avoid more talk. Learning in a group of 3 – 5 people is assumed to having more knowledge and get some feedback from friends directly. It is believed that study in group of 3 to 5 people is more effective than study individually. Hendry, Hyde, and Davy (2005) argued that effective study groups are supportive, socially cohesive groups who generate mutual trust and loyalty, self-and co-regulate students' learning by giving and receiving explanations and summaries and motivating individual study as well.

The last item of the questionnaire reveals that most of the non-English learners also need an English textbook that full of colors and images because it is more interesting, yet there are some of them prefer to include a few images, not many, and be more focused on the content.

4. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the non-English learners require topics about the concrete things such as daily life and news items. They also need knowledge that relates with English for their future, such as: public speaking material and writing a CV in English. They do concern with their future. The biggest problem they face is lacking vocabulary that affects their English learning in listening, speaking, reading, and also writing skill. However, more practice will improve learners English. The lecturer must know about learner' wants and needs to prepare an appropriate material/content that suits their wants, needs, and interest to avoid mistreatment in teaching and learning process. Further research can be conducted to find out the solution of the non-English learners' lacks.

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