PRE-COURSE INQUIRIES: A PIVOTAL STEP TO DIG UP THE STUDENTS' NEEDS AND DO A COURSE ADJUSTMENT

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Abstract: Need analysis is a pivotal process prior to starting any courses in order to get initial classroom mapping about students' needs and expectations. This current study aims to describe the result of need analysis conducted prior to the course of *Bahasa Inggris* for nursing students. The method employed is descriptive quantitative using data that were collected through questionnaires distributed to the students who are taking Bahasa Inggris course in the odd semester 2022/2023. The results show several points, such as the students belonged to the beginner to intermediate level of English users who merely used English in the classroom contexts. The most challenging language skill is speaking, yet they have had learning awareness to acquire all the language skills in the targeted language. The students also propose some criteria of good teaching materials, learning activities, as well as assessment forms. Finally, the result of this current study can be one of the considerations or the basis for future learning designers, course facilitators, and institutions to design the course which meets the students' needs.
Keywords: *english, need analysis, nursing students*

INTRODUCTION

Conducting need analysis in the beginning of the course is a great way to dig deeper into the students' level, need, students' prior learning experiences, their expected

classroom, or which skills/language items they need to extra practice with. It can be also used to gather information that will serve as the basis for the developing a curriculum so that it will suit to the students' learning needs (Hariyadi & Yanti, 2019). By identifying learners' needs in general, facilitators will be able to identify the students' weaknesses and strengths of the skills they may use in potential work field or academic contexts (Ahmed Alsamadani, 2017). Further, it can also provide valuable information which enables facilitators to design meaningful syllabus which match the course objectives, activities, topic/materials, assessment, and other aspects throughout the course which give positive impact toward the learners' adaptation to the new learning atmosphere. By having the students' learning information, the teachers, for sure, can select and create the appropriate learning materials, media, activities, assessment, and atmosphere based on students' current level of English.

Regarding the importance of need analysis, many researchers conducted need analysis to match the students' needs and course objectives. (Zohoorian, 2015) conducted a need analysis to find the intersection of the skills taught using their module with the needs of the students. (Li, 2014) discussed whether and how the needs analysis can be applied in the curriculum development of the course. (Saleh, 2018) conducted a need analysis to identify language and skills of the students which is then used as the basis in determining and refining the content of the course. In addition, (Ekayati et al., 2020) also did the similar things to the non-English department students which aims at evaluating the developed English materials for the ongoing process. While the previous studies focused on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this current research is different from the previous ones as it leads to the analysis of students' needs for Bahasa Inggris course or Basic English/English for General Purposes. Further, after two years of having online learning system, this study was conducted in the post-pandemic era when students have been back to have face-to-face learning. Thus, it is crucial to dig up the needs of the students which probably change in some points.

In this current research, there are two kinds of English courses offered to the students, Bahasa Inggris and English for Nursing. Bahasa Inggris will focus on developing students' English in general while English for Nursing focuses more on English for Specific Purposes of nursing occupation. Bahasa Inggris weighs two credits divided into 1 credit for theory and 1 credit for practicum. The theory session lasts for

50 minutes while the practicum session lasts for 150 minutes. To be more specific, based on the Outcome Based Education curriculum syllabus, Bahasa Inggris is a compulsory course which aims to improve students' English language skills, prepare students for having standardized English tests and continuing studies. In other words, this course aims at developing students' English communication skills both in spoken and written forms. This course is also expected to prepare students for TOEFL/IELTS test.

In addition, according to (Ristekdikti, 2018), OBE is the education process that focuses at achieving the certain specified concrete outcome (results-oriented knowledge, ability and behaviour). When this research was conducted, the institution has been applying the OBE curriculum for a year so that restructuring of curriculum, assessment, and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning were highly required. Based on the concept of OBE curriculum, the design of learning can be compiled based on the input from stakeholders, users, graduates, learners, or teachers so that need analysis is really needed prior to the course implementation. The result of this current need analysis study is then expected to elaborate students' English background and skills which can be initial data to design the course. This current study is also aimed to give a portion toward students' voices in terms of their needs and expectations toward the course offered. Finally, the results will be able to provide input to the development of OBE-based English syllabus as well as course materials, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

METHOD

The current need analysis research was conducted in the odd semester 2022/2023 academic year focusing on the nursing students. The researchers employed a descriptive-quantitative approach. The respondents were students of class A B C D who were taking a compulsory course namely Bahasa Inggris. Questionnaire in the form of Google Form was employed as the main instrument to collect the data from the respondents who were students in semester 3 and 5 pursuing nursing undergraduate program. The google form consists of several closed as well as open ended questions which aim to dig up students' needs and expectations toward the course.

The questions in the questionnaire were divided into three sections; they were students' identity, English background, and students' opinion toward English course for the nursing field. The students' identity section tried to collect the data about students' age, first language/mother tongue used, language for daily communication, and foreign language the students have been learning. The English background section focused on digging up students' English skills, including the length of learning English, after-school English course, self-regulated activities for improving English skills, current level of students' English, as well as students' reflection toward the difficulty in learning English skills. The last section discussed the students' expectation toward the course, topics/materials, classroom activities, learning mode, learning resources, assessment throughout the course, criteria of lecturers/facilitators. The google forms were distributed to 182 students. After being distributed, data from questionnaires were analysed with descriptive statistics by specifying the frequency, percentage, and mode. The result of open-ended questions from all respondents then were classified and analysed to seek the tendency or similarity of results.

In addition, the researchers used triangulation to increase the validity and reliability of findings. Four sessions of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were employed to harness students' needs. First, the researchers explained the rule of FGD and then it was continued by discussion session based on the topic questions which were in line with the questionnaire constructed. The FGD last for about 40-60 minutes. During the discussion, the researcher made some notes to enrich the data obtained. In addition, the second Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which was divided into four sessions was conducted aat the end of the semester which focus on the students' reflection toward the class they have had whether the course has met their needs and/or expectations as well the suggestions for the next course.

FINDINGS

Language Background

Based on the result of a questionnaire and FGD toward 182 students at the third and fifth semester, it was figured out that the students' age ranges from 18 to 22 years old which can be categorized as young to mature students. Most of the students' first language are Indonesian, Javanese, and Madurese with the percentage 49.5%, 41,8%,

and 6.6% respectively. Other first languages used were Using (Banyuwangi) and Balinese. Furthermore, the language used for daily communication is Javanese, Indonesian, and Madurese with the percentage 53.8%, 35.2%, and 6% respectively. Around 50% of the students also stated that they have been learning English for 7-12 years. In other words, most students have started learning English since the first grade of elementary school or around 6-7 years old. Those who have learned English for more than 12 years usually started learning English from preschool or kindergarten (4-6 years old). Even though students have been learning English for such long time, based on the students' language reflection data, it was obtained that 70.9% students were at the beginner level while 29.1% were at the intermediate one.

Based on the students' reflection, it was also figured out that the easiest English skill to be learned is reading (80.8%) followed by listening, writing, and speaking. It is interesting that the result is in line with the next question about the hardest language skill to learn. Based on the questionnaire, 51.1% of the students stated that speaking is the hardest skill which is then followed by listening (38.5%), writing (9.3%), and reading (1.1%). Based on the findings, most students considered speaking as a difficult skill as it involves complex components at once, namely grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.

Despite the responses on the level of difficulty on English language skill, students had the learning awareness that all the language skills and components are important to be learned. Based on the question about the importance of language skills and components, all skills and components have similar results as shown in the Figure 1 below.
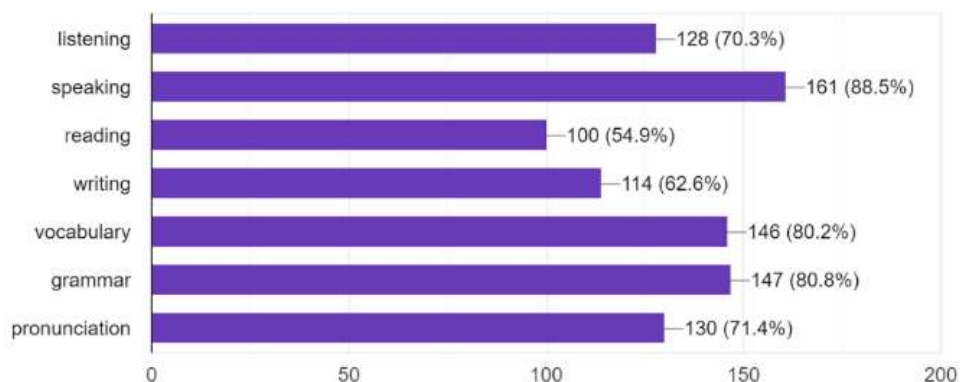

Figure 1. Students' responses toward the importance of language skills and components

From the bar graph above, speaking has the highest percentage (88.5%), followed by grammar (80.8%), vocabulary (80.2%), pronunciation (71.4%), listening (70.3%), writing (62.6%), and reading (54.9%). In other words, the differences among skills are not significant so that students believe that all is important to support their English acquisition.

Learning Activities

As the young adult learners who have learning responsibility, students stated that they have practiced English independently to improve their English skills. A number of activities that students do outside the classroom are listening to English songs (83.5%), watching English movie with Indonesian subtitle (68.5%), watching English movies with English subtitles (25.8%), reading English books/novels (20.3%), writing in English (18.7%), watching non-English movie with English subtitle (18.7%), do English conversation with family or friends (5.5%). Other ways to learn English independently done by the students are watching English videos, playing games, learning English through online applications, and joining English clubs/events. Listening to music/songs is the students' most favorite activities to improve their English. From the data, it was also found out that most of the students chose independent learning in the form of entertaining activities, such as listening to music and watching movies. These two activities were popular due the fact that entertaining activities are fun, exciting, and provide a relaxing learning atmosphere. It is interesting that only 20.3% of the students do reading outside the classroom.

Learning Resources and Facilitators

In terms of the learning sources, 94.5% students think they need an English module that can help their learning process. Based on the questionnaire, students expect that the topics/materials can cover all language skills and components, medical vocabulary, daily conversation particularly between nurse and patient, nursing plan care, gerontologic and child nursing, writing review and research in English, and health issues. Based on this need, an English module in accordance with the students' needs and expectations should be developed to help the course facilitators in the process of teaching as well as provide the students with the learning guide that can be learned outside the English session. In addition, more students still prefer the printed module (75.8%) instead of the PDF form (53.3%) or the learning materials which are organized

in university Learning Management System (37.9%). The future developed module is also expected to provide a myriad of authentic materials, necessary information and intriguing tasks which support the value of agronursing as well as promote students' critical thinking and learning. Furthermore, some criteria of facilitators that are expected by the students are bilingual, friendly, and patient, active, can explain clearly, can adjust students' level, give feedback, not monotonous, helpful, fair, can motivate students, responsible, proactive, responsive, communicative and interactive. In terms of mode of learning, 66.5% of students agree to have offline learning, 29.7% choose to have offline and online, and only 3.8% choose full online.

DISCUSSION

Language Background

Based on the findings on the students' age which ranges on 18-22 years old, it can be concluded that students taking the English course are categorized as young adult learners who have some learning traits, such as self confident, responsible, autonomous, and self-regulated, multi-tasking, purposeful, and generally more practical as well as result oriented (Pappas, 2013). These characteristics, for sure, need to be facilitated by learning facilitators in designing the courses so that it suits the students' age. Students at this age need information that can be immediately applicable to their professional needs, give them practical knowledge to improve their skills, facilitate their future work, boost up their confidence, and meet their individual learning needs. Further, young adult students have been mature so that the class offered should also be able to bridge the students' past experiences to new concepts, encourage and emphasize more on discussion and sharing activities, promote higher order thinking skills, as well as create a learning community with profound interaction. To be highlighted, the researchers believed that the length and/or the starting age of learning foreign language has no significant correlation toward the students' English acquisition. As the students are young adult learners, there are a lot of other factors that affect their learning achievement, such as motivation. Motivation is one of the key factors that plays pivotal roles in the success or failure of learning process (Alizadeh, 2016).

In other words, all the students were foreign learners of English. It means that they merely learn and use English in the classroom setting. English is not used as a

medium of communication for daily basis. However, it is widely known that English has been prioritized as the most important foreign language to be taught in educational settings for its position as lingua franca which is used in international communication. It was chosen as the language of wider communication and became the only foreign language which is a compulsory subject in schools. At the school as well as university level, English has a small portion which may be taught once a week, students merely use English inside the English classroom session, outside the classroom they will use Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese to utter the ideas so that even though they have learned learning for twelve years, they have not been a good user of English. Many students, even the ones who are majoring in English language, still have to struggle in order to understand the English textbooks. It can be said that most of the students are the basic user of English or in the A2 level of CEFR. Specifically British Council (2023) explains that students at this level are able to:

- understand sentences and common expressions about familiar topics, including very basic personal and family information, shopping, places of interest and work;
- communicate in simple, everyday tasks that require only simple and direct exchanges of information on familiar topics;
- describe aspects of their past, environment and matters related to their immediate needs, using simple language.

The results of students' language reflection give implications toward how the learning designers or course facilitators provide comprehensible inputs one level above the learners' language proficiency level so that the materials given will be understood by the students and still challenge the students to develop their language skills.

Speaking becomes the hurdle for most of the students as they are lack of vocabulary, lack in pronunciation, lack of confidence in speaking, and fear of making mistakes in conversation. There are some psychological factors faced by the students when they speak in the class: fear of mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence and lack of motivation. students were afraid to make mistakes when pronouncing words, so they were shy to speak and express their opinions and thoughts in English (Fahira, 2022). These findings are also supported by (Verdiyeva & Huseynova, 2017) who figured out that the speaking problems which hurdle students' foreign language performance are the feeling of being embarrassed, nervous, shy, and hesitant to deliver

the ideas orally. For many EFL students, the fear of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, sentence construction while speaking holds them back and inhibits their communication. Another study conducted by (Franscy & Ramli, 2022) also figured out that speaking still becomes the problems for most of Indonesian EFL students due to linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. Further, (Mappiasse & Bin Sihes, 2014) concluded in their study that to communicate in English is a difficult mission in Indonesia because of the emphasis on the national language (Bahasa Indonesia).

The fear of making mistakes has also affected the students' expression in an EFL (English as Foreign Language) speaking class have the courage to speak. Acquiring English, particularly in a productive skill that requires students to perform directly and spontaneously, becomes more difficult because students merely learn the language in the classroom with a limited time. Thus, exposure to get the language input and practice it in the real communication in the real-life context is required. Students think that it is easier to learn reading in English because this belongs to passive language in which students have enough time and less learning anxiety to comprehend the texts.

Learning Activities

The result of students' responses about English favorite activities which is listening to the song is in line with the theory that songs are a great source of 'real-life' language and can be used to practice lots of different language skills. Songs are also a fun and entertaining way to learn English, such as pronunciation, rhythm, stress, intonation, sentence pattern, reading and speaking skills, and so forth. Songs serve as a source of target language that is authentic which provides appropriate input in learning English. Based on the research conducted by (Kurniawan & Aryani, 2019) which stated that watching movies can give some advantages to the students' process of acquiring the foreign language, such as pronunciation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and spoken expressions used by the actor/actress.

The small number of students who do reading is in line with the study report conducted by Central Connecticut State University which has revealed that Indonesia ranks 60th out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest (Jakartapost, 2016). Theoretically reading in the target language is important to give language input as well as develop students' foreign language acquisition. Not only intensive reading, which is

usually conducted within the classroom setting, students need to have self-motivation to broaden their input through extensive reading outside the class. Extensive reading activities give a chance for language learners to read large amounts of texts for enjoyment so that they will improve their vocabulary and fluency because of exposure to the written language. It is widely believed that reading extensively can give a myriad of input of second language learning so that it can improve learners' ability both in active (speaking and writing) as well as passive skill (listening). They all indicated that extensive reading has significant effects to greatly improve second language learners' language acquisition. Regarding to the effectiveness of extensive reading to improve students' English skill, the course facilitator can provide a collection of books or reading materials which enable students to have the opportunity to read whichever books they choose, with the expectation that they read a large number of books in the target language within their reading level throughout the semester.

In addition, as the young adult learners, students have had internal awareness that learning English is important for the future career as a nurse. Several reasons which motivate nursing students to learn English are to help them to communicate with colleagues and patients, read and understand the latest medical journal and references which are mostly written English, broaden career or study in foreign countries, update new global information, and collaborate with others from different countries. The classroom activities students want to have during the process of teaching and learning cover language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), pronunciation practices on medical words correctly, debate, discussion, translating, and ice breaking. Regarding the assignment, students prefer the assignment which enables them to practice their communication skills, group works, and role play. These results give implications toward the development of the next Bahasa Inggris course in the Faculty of Nursing which should be in line with the students' needs and expectations.

Furthermore, as the setting is EFL classroom, the language bridge plays a very important role. It is shown that the use of bilingualism has an important role in teaching and learning at intermediate level (Sipra, 2013). The code switching and/or mixing between L2 and L1 is intended to facilitate learners to catch up with difficult or unfamiliar words, complex ideas. It is in line with result of research conducted by (Chairuddin & Aditya, 2021) which figured out that by using code switching, students

understood the instruction, explanation, and another thing related to the teaching and learning process. In that research, the researcher believed that bilingualism had positive implication to the students' speaking achievement. However, it should be noted that in EFL classes, the role of bilingualism should be only supporting instead of substituting the target language. Thus, it will not reduce students' exposure and capacity to communicate well in English.

In addition, in term of learning mode, the offline learning mode is chosen due to some reasons, such as it is more effective, more interaction during the process of teaching and learning, students can focus more as they are in the class physically, they do not need to deal with internet trouble. The ones who choose online to have some reasons such as they do not need to go to campus so that it can save energy. The other reason is that online learning is more flexible toward the students' learning pace and styles. In the post-pandemic learning era, the proportion of offline and online learning is 75% and 25 % consecutively. This ratio is expected to be ideal to facilitate the need to have face to face meetings in learning foreign languages as well as adapt to digital learning. In the offline learning mode, it is still highly suggested that the technology and up-to-date application is used to support the process of teaching and learning and give challenging learning experiences.

Learning Resources and Facilitators

From the data in the questionnaire, it can be concluded that English module is highly needed to help students' learning. English module in accordance with the students' needs and faculty value which is arousing should be developed to help the course facilitators as well as students in the process of teaching and learning. The existence of English module will also promote students' independent learning as they can have learning guide that can be learned outside the English session. The module should cover all language skills and components, medical vocabulary, daily conversation particularly between nurse and patient, nursing plan care, gerontologic and child nursing, writing review and research in English, and health issues. Further, the module can be in the form of technology-integrated printed module or e module that can be interactive and easily accessed by students.

In addition, in order to meet the students' expectation towards facilitators' criteria, the coordinator of the course should communicate it with the course facilitators.

In the beginning of the semester, a meeting coordination should be made to align not only the course objectives, materials, activities, assessment, but also standardize the quality and capability of the facilitator.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Needs analysis is vitally important in designing and teaching the course. This current study results in information about the students' language background and English level, students' perception about learning materials, activities, assessment, and course facilitators. This study then leads the researchers to move forward to the next study about designing the blueprint of the learning materials which can facilitate students' needs. Further, the result of this current study also leads to the development and revision of course OBE syllabus and lesson plans in *Bahasa Inggris* course for nursing students which is expected to be able to ease the next lecturer in conducting the course. Professional collaboration among course facilitators, materials developers, and stakeholders are required to construct the English module that gives students learning guidelines and promote autonomous learning experiences.

Based on the results and analysis in this current study, the researchers highlight a number of suggestions for the learning designers, course facilitators, as well as administrator (Faculty), such as: (1) regarding the low interest in reading English books outside the class, there should be a program in order to develop students' reading habits in the form of extensive reading activities; (2) the faculty or university should develop their collections for possible extensive reading. The reading materials are not limited to the nursing related but also literature, comics, magazines, and non-fiction books in the target languages at a variety of reading levels; (3) as there is no English module to support Bahasa Inggris course, the English module should be developed soon. The developed English module is also expected to provide a myriad of authentic materials, necessary information and intriguing tasks which promote students' critical thinking and support the faculty value.

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