**DESIGNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM**

**(Survival Language Learning for Travelers)**

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**Abstract**

Traveling abroad now becomes a trend in society. Many travelers from their home countries come and visit other countries. Before they have the journey, one of the things that should be prepared is communication skill to survive in the destination country. Since English is a common language spoken in many countries as a native and as a second or foreign language, it is necessary for travelers, in this case, to have English communicative competence, mainly in spoken language. This paper presents a plan of language course for people wishing to visit a country which has different communicative setting. The syllabus is based the combination of situational and functional syllabuses. Based on the needs, environment, and principles analyses we have identified. It is stated that foreign travelers require a language teaching program concerning with survival language. It will focus on survival language which consists of the words and phrases encountered in daily situations where the learners listen and speak the language.

**Key words**: syllabus design, situational syllabus and functional syllabus, survival language, travelers, need, target, evaluation, teaching materials

1. **RATIONALE**

The course is designed for people aged about 21 years old who are wishing to travel in English Speaking countries. They have learned English during high schools but their English is not as good as expected. They wish to improve and increase their basic communication skills in English in order to survive their life in English speaking countries. This basically deals with oral communication skill to interact with people in new environment. The course seeks to ease them to carry out their journey and destination. So, it provides the basic communication skills needed to communicate in a variety of different public places and the basic vocabulary used in English communication (survival language). It also seeks to give them the confidence to use English more effectively to achieve their own goals. The material will be taught based on situational syllabus - it is organized based on the needs of the language which is used in different situations, and functional syllabus - the course content is based on functions, not grammatical structures. This course will be held in 8 weeks with two meetings each week.

1. **NEED AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSES**

This English teaching plan is considered to be an ESP (English for specific purposes) course. It is an approach to course design (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). In designing an English course, we need to identify the learners’ need. It starts with the questions “Why do the learners need to learn English?” Before we design a course, we have to find information about the learners’ want, lack, necessity. This activity is called learners’ need analysis. Besides that, we also have to identify the situation or environment where the teaching-learning takes place. This includes learners’ condition, teacher, and learning situation. All these are implemented to make sure the process of learning is realistic.

1. **ENTRY AND EXIT LEVEL**

In designing a language course, it is necessary to analyze the level at which the program will start and the level learners may be expected to reach at the end of the course. To plan this program, it is necessary to determine the level of students’ language skills, especially listening and speaking in form of interview test and individual performance.

**Entry Level**

Based on the analysis on the learners’ need, it was believed that most of the learners’ listening and speaking ability were still in the beginner level. They almost never speak English in a most situation, so they have difficulty to communicate on any subject. They sometimes, if not most, fail to understand what people talk and to make themselves understood on spoken English.

**Designing language course (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)**

**Identify learners’ need**

**situation**

**Select theoretical views of language**

**Establish evaluation procedures which require the use of skills**

Objectives

**Design materials to exemplify syllabus items:**

**Write tasks to focus on skill**

**Create Syllabus**

**Identify learners’ target situation**

In listening proficiency, as in speaking skill, they are still in low level which is almost no practical understanding of the spoken language. They almost never involved in listening activity in such social activity. They just listen incidentally through watching TV without any intention to listen. Understanding is limited to occasional situation, with isolated words, and with essentially no ability to comprehend spoken language.

Thus, in speaking skill, their ability is relatively low. This aspect of speaking includes:

* **Accuracy**; the learners pronounce some wrong words as well as many ‘basic’ grammatical and lexical errors. They have not mastered any of the language skill and are as practiced in the course.
* **Fluency**; the learners speak with many long and unnatural pauses. They speak with lack of expression and many unnatural pauses. They tend to do many unnecessary repetitions.
* **Comprehensibility**; they cannot fully understand anything of what is said. They are unable to make any thing clear. They tend to give illogical responses and repetitions.

**Exit Level**

Exit level or target situation here means the condition of the learners that is supposed to have after the course finished. After following this course, the learners are expected to improve their listening and speaking ability from the beginner level to the intermediate level. It means that the learners are supposed to be able to speak and understand English rather fluently based on a new context. They are on a par with an educated native speaker, so they are completely at ease in his use of English on all topics discussed.

For listening proficiency, the learners are expected to be able to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialect including technical discussions within a special field, so that they can interact, giving ideas or opinion, and give correct response. Since they are the travelers who are going to stay and interact with foreign people with new culture, they will have effective understanding of face-to-face speech delivered with normal clarity and speed in a standard dialect on general topics and areas of special interest.

Whereas, for speaking skill, they will be able to improve the speaking aspects, that is:

* **Accuracy**; they pronounce the words with few interference of their first language. They make only a few mistakes related to grammar and lexical.
* **Fluency**; their speaking flows easily with full of expression. They speak with very slightly unnatural pauses.
* **Comprehensibility**; they can easily understand what is said without interrupting or clarifying it.

1. **SURVIVAL LANGUAGE**

Survival language, the term used by Nation and Crabbe (1993), is a language which is used to help people to survive and to communicate in new situations in a country or context. It has purpose and limit which will be explained in the following discussion.

**The Purpose**

The content of survival syllabus has been selected to consider the situation of someone who is going to stay in another country for somewhere between one and three months. This period is long enough to make it worthwhile in learning a language and to justify a sustained intensive course. This English teaching program does not consider special needs which the traveler may have, such as to do academic research, to arrange a trade deal, or to get married, yet it focuses on survival, travel, and social needs.

**The Limitations**

The syllabus has two focuses:

* + A focus on a spoken language on the assumption that in the mainstream tourist areas of a country communication will be in a spoken form.
  + A focus on vocabulary which there is much more involved in language learning than memorizing words, but a carefully chosen vocabulary that takes account of the patterns words occur in can be an excellent basis for planning short term learning.

1. **SYLLABUS FOR TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS**

The course of this English teaching program, based on the need and situational analysis, will basically implement two type of syllabus, that is, situational and functional syllabi (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, Richards, 2002)

**Situational Syllabus**

Situational syllabuses are the most commonly proposed alternative to replace the grammatical syllabuses. It is the only other kind of syllabus that is at all widely used as a basis for the construction of teaching materials. It takes situational needs as the starting point. Units in the syllabus have situational instead of grammatical labels. The syllabus is designed according to situations. It takes different situations as the topic of different units, for example, Thanking letter”, “A Journey”, “In a Shop”, “ At The Airport”, “ In The Post-office”, etc. Its aim is to prepare the learners for the future situation in which he might use the language. It takes account of the learner and his needs. The learner is taught with the language that is necessary for him to perform linguistically in the situation in which he is likely to need the language. It is supposed to be a more efficient process because it includes only what is relevant to the learner. It is also supposed to be more motivating because it is the learner- rather than subject-centered.

Language is always used in a social context and cannot be fully understood without reference to the context. We restrict our choice of linguistic forms according to social situations, which looks at norms of behavior and cultural values (Nation, 2010). This local culture could contradict and threaten the new comers. We use different language in different situations that we encounter. Situational syllabuses can meet our needs in this respect. The contents of a situational syllabus usually consist of an inventory language situations and a description of the linguistic content of each of these situations (Wilkins: 1976: 16). The learner is taught the correct and standard linguistic utterances which are used for different situations. Materials designed according to situational syllabuses are generally interesting and learners are involved in practicing the language in a created environment. As a result, the classes could be more lively and interesting. What’s more, learners are more motivated and more likely to have a sense of achievement.

In this course, the situations will be created by the teacher and the learners will use those situations as the field of practicing their communication skill in term of listening and speaking. For example, there will be a situation of the communicative needs a temporary visitor, which has some contents, that is:

* Purposive domain : Tourist, temporary visitor
* Setting: Foreign city, used occasionally, culturally different, recreational, urban, unhurried
* Interaction: Consumer, costumer, non-native, and guest.
* Instrumentality: Spoken dialogue, face to face, very low on size of utterance, complexity, range of forms, delicacy, and speed. Middling on flexibility. High tolerance of error, stylistic failure, reference to a dictionary, repetition, and hesitation.

**Functional Syllabus**

Realizing that the need of learners in learning English cannot be covered only by the material given in the situational syllabus, we see that some expressions related to the situation might be faced by the learners must also be known by them. So, we include the notional-functional syllabus for teaching-learning process.

A notional-functional syllabus is an approach where the organization of the material is determined with notions or ideas that learners expect to be able to express through the target language and the functions acts learners expect to be able to accomplish (Wilkins, 1976). The functional-notional syllabus takes semantic knowledge as primary and attempts to answer the question ‘what do users of the language need to express? This implies a belief in language as a system but a system of meaning rather than forms (Johnson, 1982).

This type of syllabus is very popular for the following reasons (Richards, (2001)

* They reflect a more comprehensive view of language than grammar syllabus and focus on the use of the language rather than linguistic form.
* They can readily be linked to other types of syllabus content.
* They provide convenient frame work for the design of teaching materials, particularly in the domain of listening and speaking.

However, functional syllabus has some disadvantages and therefore it has been criticized as the following (Richards, (2001) :

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* There are no clear criteria for selecting or grading functions
* They represent a simplistic view of communicative competence and fail to address the process of communication
* They represent an atomistic approach to language, that is, one that assumes that language ability can be broken into discrete component that can be taught separately.
* They often lead to a phrase-book approach to teaching expressions and idioms used in different functions

The topics of activities can include, at a bank, at home, in a hotel, at the air port, in a café, at the post office, in a restaurant, making arrangement, attending meeting, taking part in interviews buying and selling, dealing with others, using telephones, travelling, reporting, receiving visitors, etc.

1. **ACTIVITIES**

This course uses a notional-functional syllabus in order to provide the learners about the expression commonly used while communicating with foreign people, especially English in English speaking country. So, the material included in the course is some form of culturally bound expressions, such as: socializing expression and getting things done.

In socializing, some expressions like greeting when meeting people, introducing themselves in front of new people, and taking leave from a place will be given as the material using some techniques in delivering them. Work in pairs is one of technique will be used to deliver the material. So, the learners will be given a time to observe independently the material which has been explained by the teacher at the beginning of the class then they will discuss more about the material with their partner. After they discuss the material with their partner, they will be given the time to practice speaking related to the material with their partner. While they are practicing their speaking, teacher monitors the learners whether they have some difficulties about the material or not. In the last, learners will be given a time to practice in front of the class with their own partner, or teacher may change the partner to different person in order to test their socialized ability with others. In this part, the teacher will also make an assessment based on their performance. Usually, we make the assessment for each material twice using scoring rubric.

The process above also happens in delivering “getting things done” material. Learners will get some expressions related to requesting others to do something. They will be asked to do “work in pair”, or “individual performance” activity. Whilst, in individual performance, they will be asked to practice to speak using the expression of the material while they have been given a chance to observe the teacher’s explanation and their peers as well. After all of that, their performance will be assessed by the teacher using scoring rubric by Heaton (1991.

1. **EVALUATION**

Evaluation is important to make sure or to know if the goal of is achieved or not. According to (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) there are two levels of evaluation, that is, learner assessment and course evaluation. The learner assessment deals with the measurement learners’ language competence related to goal of the course. I can be at the beginning as knowing entry level or present knowledge. This type of test is called placement test or pre-test. The next measurement is in middle and at the end of the course to seek the learners’ development during and after the course. This test is called achievement test. Whilst, course evaluation is used to see the whole process of language teaching program.

1. **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Foreign travelers need survival language in visiting English speaking country. The learners will be dealing with new situation or new communicative setting.
2. This English language program uses two kinds of syllabus; situational and functional syllabus.
3. In applying the situational syllabus, the teacher sets up imaginary situations and the learners will use these situations to practice listening and speaking skill meanwhile in applying functional syllabus, the teacher gives several kind of expression related to the situation might be faced by the learners in foreign city.
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