Designing English Speaking Materials Based on EFL Students' Learning Needs: A Needs Analysis at Vocational Schools

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Abstract

The English Day program is an extracurricular program and an alternative process to improve students ability on speaking. English day able to amuse students and teacher to learn English. The objectives of this research were to describe the students' need for speaking materials and to design a Syllabus For the English Day Program at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap. The researchers used qualitative research design by using some instruments like questionnaires, observation, and interviews. The data of this study are information from these instruments; in other words, sources of data are the result of interviews, questionnaires, and observation. The research respondents or sample of this study were 10 students, 10 teachers who guided the English Day Program, and 1 English Supervisor from the Education Department at Nias Barat to validate the syllabus design for the English Day Program. The findings showed that the students needed materials for speaking that were attractive and interesting, with a score 2,6 on the scale 1-4, and based on their daily and social life context, most students need speaking practice. The product of this study was a syllabus and supplementary speaking materials for the English Day Program. The contextual teaching and learning supplementary book consisted of three units. The result of the data computation of the book evaluation from the expert showed that the developed contextual teaching and learning speaking materials were categorized as good. The implication of this study, the English teacher must add more speaking practice in the English day materials.

Keywords: Need analysis; Syllabus design; Speaking skills; Language materials; English day

INTRODUCTION

Need analysis is a crucial investigation conducted for a specific purpose, particularly in the context of designing a syllabus (Rahmawan, 2021). The syllabus itself is a fundamental framework that focuses on the learning content to achieve predetermined educational objectives. Essentially, the syllabus serves as the core of the curriculum, playing a pivotal role in facilitating the learning process and ensuring that the intended learning goals are accomplished. According to Kim (2023), understanding students' needs within a specific domain is essential to recognize their interests. Furthermore, Sinaga et al. (2022) emphasize that students' interests can stimulate enthusiasm, thereby contributing to the successful achievement of educational activities. Ahmmed (2020) also asserts that learners' diverse needs have led to a variety of courses being designed differently across various parts of the world.

A syllabus is described as a mid-term planning tool designed to help students attain specific competencies. Mohammed (2024) highlights that these competencies encompass

core language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To effectively develop these skills, it is essential to construct a well-designed syllabus (Wulandari & Hustarna, 2020). However, Arsiyana & Hernadi (2020) argue that if the syllabus and teaching methods focus solely on grammar, it may result in poor language performance, particularly in speaking skills. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach to syllabus design is necessary to enhance overall language proficiency.

Achieving these competencies requires collaborative efforts among teachers to design an effective syllabus. In Indonesia, this collaborative process is facilitated through a group discussion forum known as Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP). The outcomes of these discussions are then implemented during the teaching and learning processes. The competencies agreed upon are standardized across different grades or levels. Gómez (2014) defines competence as the ability to integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes into performance. Brković et al. (2020) further highlight that language competencies are particularly critical for the teaching profession, as language serves as the primary medium through which teachers convey knowledge and skills to their students. This is particularly evident in programs such as English Day, where teachers must effectively transmit their language skills to students. However, Biros (2021) notes that while competencies need periodic evaluation, their fundamental descriptions and criteria should remain unchanged. Such evaluations can be conducted through MGMP to ensure the continuous improvement of teaching strategies.

Speaking is identified as a productive language skill that enables individuals to convey their thoughts clearly (Rao, 2019). However, anxiety significantly impacts an individual's ability to express ideas effectively (Bashori, 2021). Self-confidence is another crucial factor that contributes to the enhancement of speaking skills (Allo & Priawan, 2019). Moreover, the selection of appropriate speaking materials is critical in improving students' speaking abilities (Devi et al., 2021). Both anxiety and lack of self-confidence can hinder speaking proficiency, but these challenges can be mitigated by designing simple and effective speaking materials aimed at enhancing students' speaking abilities.

The English Day Program is an extracurricular initiative implemented at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap to address students' weaknesses in English speaking skills. This program serves as an innovative approach to enhance students' speaking abilities. Previous studies (Bashori, 2021; Mashula & Ratna, 2023; Riswandi & Wahyudi, 2018; Toding et al., 2021) have employed classroom action research to improve speaking skills. Similarly, experimental methods have been utilized in studies like Krebt (2017) and Suryani (2015) to resolve speaking-related challenges. However, the novelty of the current study lies in its unique approach—designing speaking materials specifically as supplementary resources for extracurricular activities like the English Day Program. This approach distinguishes the current research from previous investigations by contributing to both the development of teaching materials and syllabus design to address English speaking issues at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap. To provide a clear direction for this study, the following research questions are proposed: What are the students' needs regarding speaking materials for the English Day Program at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap? And How should the syllabus for the English Day Program be designed at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap?

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
The research design of this study adopts a qualitative approach, focusing on exploring the needs and characteristics of students regarding speaking materials for the English Day Program. This approach aligns with Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) assertion that qualitative research investigates research objects through observation, interviews, document reviews, and questionnaires. In this context, the researchers employed these

instruments to gather comprehensive data. The study began with administering interviews to students to identify their needs and preferences concerning speaking material topics. The objective of this initial interview was to gain insights into the students' expectations and requirements for the English Day Program.

Research Instruments

In line with the principles of need analysis (Lestari & Priyana, 2020), a structured questionnaire was developed to collect detailed information regarding students' weaknesses in speaking and their lack of confidence in communication. The questionnaire, administered through Google Forms, encouraged students to choose from provided options while allowing space for additional input. Following the student questionnaire, structured interviews were conducted with ten English teachers involved in the English Day Program. These interviews aimed to gather information about the students' characteristics, challenges faced during speaking sessions, and recommendations for supplementary materials. To strengthen the data collection, an observation sheet was also used to document relevant classroom interactions and identify the specific needs for supplementary speaking materials within the program.

Research Participants

The study employed purposive sampling, as emphasized by Miles (2014), focusing on individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Ten students were selected due to their low motivation to learn English, which directly influences their participation in the English Day Program. Similarly, ten English teachers were chosen based on their active roles in facilitating the program. This purposive selection ensured that the data gathered was representative and relevant to the study's focus. Data collection involved a two-step process: students first completed the questionnaire, followed by interviews that served to confirm and elaborate on the questionnaire responses. The information gathered from students was then cross-verified through interviews with the English teachers to ensure consistency and depth of understanding.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through a systematic tabulation of the results from the questionnaires and interviews. The need analysis process identified both the target requirements and weaknesses in speaking materials. This analysis described how students' daily speaking activities influence their social interactions and highlighted the gaps in existing materials. Based on these findings, the researchers developed a syllabus that addressed the identified needs and incorporated supplementary materials designed to enhance speaking skills. This approach ensures that the English Day Program is better aligned with students' linguistic and communicative challenges, fostering improved engagement and language proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the students' need for material speaking must be attractive and based on their daily lives. The description of need analysis must be based on the need principles like input, content, language, and task. The result can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Students' Need for Speaking Materials on the English Day Program

No	Statements	Score
	Input	
1	The component of the Syllabus has appropriated to the	2

No	Statements	Score
	need analysis conducted by the teachers and students	
	Content	
2	The learning process is conducted outside of the class to create a fun and fresh learning environment	4
3	The students can freely practice based on the method they like	4
4	The materials in the English Day Program are interesting	2
5	The materials in the English Day program are attractive	3
6	The materials in the English Day program are based on your daily life	2
7	The materials in the English Day program are based on your social life context	2
	Language	
8	Use English with the appropriate grammatical structure	3
9	The sentences used are simple and easily understood	3
	Task	
10	The syllabus component consists of tasks which are used to assess and evaluate the learning process achievement	1
	Average	2,6

The *input* aspect above (score 2) indicates that the syllabus is enough. It means that the syllabus is not good but not bad. In other words, the syllabus of English Day must be developed based on the students' needs. The second aspect is content, almost all the students agree that teaching and learning are done outside the class to make the atmosphere of teaching and learning fun. In addition to that, the students need an innovative teaching method that forces them to practice English in the program of English Day. The low score in the aspect of content is teaching materials. Some students declare that the provided materials are not interesting and attractive, out of social/daily context.

The next aspect is *language* almost all participants said that the language in teaching materials of English Day is appropriate and simple (easy to understand). However, the average score is 3, meaning language improvement is needed in teaching materials, so the language is simpler and more appropriate. The last aspect is the *task*, this aspect is the lowest score from the need principle. This aspect needs to improve. The plan of this program (English Day) is poor in evaluating or assessing the student's ability to speak through the English Day Program.

In addition to that, the researchers also added supplementary speaking materials to the English day program important to do. The supplementary materials were made available to three (My school life, my home life, and my neighborhood) units of speaking materials. The description of supplementary materials can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Students' Need for Speaking Supplementary Materials at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap

Unit	Title	Supplementary materials
I	My School	Add speaking practice based on the learning objectives and contextual life
II	My home life	Add more speaking practice based contextual life
III	My Neighbourhood	Add more speaking materials based on contextual life

The analysis table highlights the importance of integrating more speaking materials that are rooted in the students' contextual life experiences. This recommendation is particularly significant for enhancing students' abilities to engage in daily speaking activities. Contextualized speaking materials allow learners to relate their classroom learning to real-life situations, which is essential for fostering effective communication skills. By focusing on everyday themes, students can develop greater confidence and fluency in using English in practical, day-to-day contexts.

To address these needs, supplementary speaking materials were developed in the form of a dedicated speaking book designed to support the teaching and learning objectives at SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap. This supplementary book consists of three comprehensive chapters, each focusing on distinct themes that align with students' everyday experiences. The contextual teaching and learning approach guided the development of these materials, ensuring that the content remains relevant and engaging for students. Based on the findings from the needs analysis, 50% of the students expressed a preference for themes related to school and home life, indicating the importance of familiar contexts in their learning journey.

The first chapter of the book, "My School Life," introduces expressions and dialogues related to students' experiences at school. The second chapter, "My Home Life," focuses on language used in family and household settings, while the third chapter, "My Neighborhood," addresses expressions relevant to social interactions within the community. Each chapter is designed with specific learning objectives aimed at enabling students to comprehend and appropriately use various expressions in real-life scenarios. To ensure clarity and focus, each unit within the chapters lists detailed indicators that outline the specific skills and competencies students are expected to achieve by the end of each lesson. These indicators serve as measurable goals, helping both teachers and students track progress effectively.

Furthermore, after identifying students' needs regarding speaking materials, as outlined in the analysis table, the researcher initiated the development of an enhanced syllabus for the English Day Program. This process involved distributing questionnaires to gather deeper insights into student preferences and challenges. The primary results of the questionnaire, which offer valuable guidance for syllabus development, are presented in the following table. This systematic approach ensures that the syllabus is responsive to the actual needs of learners, promoting more effective and meaningful language learning experiences.

Table 3. Promoting a Syllabus Design for the English Day Program

No	Questionnaire	Answer	Dominant answer (%)
1	Why do you join the English day Program?	For the best future life	70%
2	When do you speak English?	In the English Day Program	50%
3	Are the materials easy to understand?	Easy to understand	60%
4	What does English for you in the future?	Next higher Education	70%
5	Would you like the speaking course to be taken away from SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap because you do not find the present syllabus and the way of classroom teaching helpful in fulfilling your needs of English?	Strongly disagree	100%
6	Bad English competence will affect academic performance	agree	60%

No	Questionnaire	Answer	Dominant answer (%)
7	What speaking class activity do you like?	Class with a lot of practice activities	60%
8	How do you prefer to do learning activities?	working in pairs or groups	70%
9	what kind of role do you like your teacher to have?	as a facilitator and guide	70%

In the table above, see that the researchers distribute nine questions. The purpose of these questions is to promote the development of the syllabus used at English day Program at SMK 1 Satuatap.

On the first question, it can be concluded that most students reason learning English for their future life. This question was also confirmed to the students, more than half of them said that the vacancy that they had found required English ability. In addition to that, some of them said that global chance they will have if they have a good language proficiency score (TOEFL). The second questionnaire states that some students practice their speaking ability while in the program of English Day. More relaxed and fun situations are created in this program (English Day). In the third question, 60% of students said that the materials in English Day are easy to understand.

The answer to the fourth question declares that 70% of students learn English for their future. It means that English is considered for better education in the future. In the next question, the students disagree if English is taken away from the SMK Negeri 1 Satuatap curriculum. It means they love to learn English for their future. The sixth answer states that 60% of students agree that English affects their academic performance. In addition to that, 60% of students like the teaching activities with practice activities. This result is emphasized by working or practicing in pairs of groups. Finally, 70% of students agree if the English teacher's role as a facilitator in the English Day Program.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that need analysis activities serve as a fundamental step in the development of effective English materials for EFL learners, particularly in vocational schools. In these educational settings, the primary focus is on equipping students with language skills that are directly applicable to specific industries. This aligns with the broader objective of vocational education, which is to prepare students for real-world employment scenarios. The process of need analysis involves systematically identifying learners' requirements, challenges, and expectations, thereby enabling the development of tailored materials that meet both academic and professional objectives. The findings of this study corroborate the work of Arsiyana and Hernadi (2020), who emphasized that vocational students' English learning needs are primarily shaped by their prospective career paths. These needs encompass industry-specific vocabulary, practical communication skills, and the contextual use of language relevant to workplace settings. Thus, a comprehensive need analysis extends beyond assessing linguistic proficiency to include understanding the situational demands students will likely encounter in their professional environments.

The outcomes of a thorough need analysis play a pivotal role in designing English materials that are both contextually relevant and engaging. Such materials are crafted to align with vocational objectives and address the specific communication challenges that students may face in the workplace. In this study, materials were developed to include role-plays, simulations, and practice activities that reflect real-world tasks encountered in various industries. These learning activities are consistent with Ahmadi (2018), who

emphasized the importance of integrating industry-specific terminology and communication strategies to enhance learners' practical language skills and boost their confidence. By simulating workplace scenarios, students can develop the ability to navigate professional conversations and improve their linguistic adaptability.

Furthermore, supplementary materials were designed around relevant and relatable topics, such as "My School Life," "My Home Life," and "My Neighborhood." These topics were structured into speaking material units that fostered contextual and meaningful communication practice. These materials aimed to facilitate students' engagement with familiar themes, making language acquisition more accessible and effective. This approach aligns with the principle that language learning becomes more meaningful when it is rooted in the learners' personal and social experiences.

The findings also reinforce the necessity of developing teaching materials based on identified needs. Arsiyana and Hernadi (2020), Bissonette (2017), Issabella (2019), and Lestari and Priyana (2020) collectively assert that comprehensive teaching materials and syllabi must undergo evaluation during the teaching process, particularly in the post-teaching phase. The results of this study echo these views, highlighting that the existing materials and syllabus require further enhancement, particularly regarding speaking practice. Observations and feedback indicated a notable deficiency in the quantity and quality of speaking activities provided. This gap suggests that learners need more opportunities to engage in practical speaking exercises to build confidence and proficiency. Supporting this finding, Ahmadi (2018), Luczak (2023), Rahmawan (2021), Wulandari (2020), and Wulandari and Hustarna (2020) advocate for the inclusion of situationally relevant supplementary materials in teaching resources. These materials should mirror real-life scenarios that learners are likely to encounter, thus enhancing their preparedness for professional interactions.

Additionally, Bin-Tahir (2020) and Rahmawan (2021) emphasize the necessity of incorporating extra speaking practice to facilitate better language acquisition outcomes. This perspective underscores the idea that increased practice opportunities can significantly improve learners' speaking abilities. Consequently, the findings suggest that supplementary materials focusing on situational speaking should be consistently incorporated into teaching programs to meet learners' developmental needs.

The second research objective further elaborates on the necessity of syllabus development for the English Day Program. The promotion of syllabus development is grounded in the principle of aligning content with students' reported needs. Mohammed (2024) underscores that syllabus design should be informed by systematic data collection, such as questionnaires and interviews. This approach ensures that the syllabus is both responsive and reflective of learners' actual requirements. Supporting this notion, Issabella (2019) confirms that effective need identification through questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs) can lead to the creation of more relevant and impactful syllabi. These methods facilitate deeper insights into learners' preferences, challenges, and expectations, thereby enabling the design of more targeted educational materials.

The findings of this study are consistent with the research of Ayuningtias et al. (2023), who revealed that speaking practice is often underrepresented in vocational English textbooks. Given this observation, it is recommended that additional speaking practice activities be integrated into the English Day Program to better prepare students for real-world communication. These activities can include interactive role-plays, peer discussions, and situational dialogues that encourage spontaneous language use. This approach not only enhances speaking proficiency but also fosters greater learner engagement and motivation.

The research findings affirm that need analysis is indispensable in the process of developing effective English teaching materials for EFL learners in vocational settings. By

focusing on learners' specific requirements, challenges, and contextual demands, educators can design materials that are both relevant and impactful. Moreover, enhancing syllabi with additional speaking practice and situationally relevant materials can significantly contribute to improving learners' communicative competence. This comprehensive approach ensures that vocational students are better equipped with the language skills necessary for their future professional environments, thereby enhancing their overall employability and confidence.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study further emphasize that need analysis activities are not merely preliminary steps but are integral to the continuous refinement and effectiveness of English materials for EFL learners, especially within the vocational school context. Vocational education is designed to prepare learners for specific job roles, making it critical for language instruction to be tailored towards the practical needs and industry-specific contexts that students will encounter post-graduation. A comprehensive need analysis helps identify gaps in learners' current abilities, preferences for learning themes, and the specific language demands of their intended professions. Vocational learners require mastery of industry-specific vocabulary and practical communication skills that align with their future career goals. The analysis process, therefore, must include in-depth inquiries into students' professional aspirations, the challenges they face in language learning, and their expectations from the learning materials. By doing so, educators can ensure that the materials developed are not only academically sound but also professionally relevant.

Moreover, the role of supplementary materials in enhancing language learning experiences cannot be overstated. In this study, supplementary speaking materials were developed in the form of a structured speaking book, which consisted of three chapters themed around "My School Life," "My Home Life," and "My Neighborhood." Each unit focused on different types of expressions and real-life conversational contexts. This thematic approach was informed by the results of the need analysis, where 50% of students indicated a preference for themes rooted in their immediate personal environments. The structure of these materials aligns with the contextual teaching and learning approach, which emphasizes the integration of learners' real-world experiences into the language learning process. Detailed learning objectives were established for each unit to ensure that students could comprehend and correctly apply the targeted expressions in relevant situations. These objectives were supported by clearly defined indicators, which provided measurable benchmarks for assessing students' progress. The findings also indicate the necessity of continuous syllabus development for programs like the English Day Program. By distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews, the researchers gathered valuable insights into the students' needs, which formed the basis for developing a more refined and responsive syllabus.

RECOMMENDATION

This study recommends future research to develop teaching materials, syllabus, and curricullum through research and development research design.

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