# The Importance of Needs Analysis in a Language Curriculum Development: An Evaluation to 2013 Curriculum

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Improving the quality of education is one important point planned by Indonesian government. In order to achieve the good quality of education, Indonesian educational system has set the goal to be achieved; as written in Indonesian constitution number 20, year 2003. To achieve the national educational goals set by Indonesian government, curriculum should be arranged and formulated strategically into certain programs. In the process of developing a language curriculum, needs analysis take a big part in setting the result to be achieved by the learners. Needs analysis in language curriculum development is defined as the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. Needs analysis is normally required before syllabus can be developed for language teaching. The study attempts to investigate the role of needs analysis in a language curriculum design and materials development. It will also discuss about managing the needs analysis in classrooms and procedures for conducting needs analysis.

*Keywords:* Needs analysis, language curriculum development, curriculum design

*Meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan adalah salah satu poin penting yang direncanakan oleh pemerintah Indonesia. Untuk mencapai kualitas pendidikan yang baik, sistem pendidikan Indonesia telah menetapkan tujuan yang ingin dicapai; sebagaimana tertulis dalam konstitusi Indonesia nomor 20, tahun 2003. Untuk mencapai tujuan pendidikan nasional yang ditetapkan oleh pemerintah Indonesia, kurikulum harus disusun dan dirumuskan secara strategis ke dalam program-program tertentu. Dalam proses mengembangkan kurikulum bahasa, analisis kebutuhan mengambil bagian besar dalam menetapkan hasil yang akan dicapai oleh para peserta didik. Analisis kebutuhan dalam pengembangan kurikulum bahasa didefinisikan sebagai proses penentuan kebutuhan yang mana pembelajar atau kelompok pembelajar membutuhkan bahasa dan mengatur kebutuhan sesuai dengan prioritas. Analisis kebutuhan biasanya diperlukan sebelum silabus dapat dikembangkan untuk pengajaran bahasa. Studi ini mencoba untuk menyelidiki peran analisis kebutuhan dalam desain kurikulum bahasa dan pengembangan bahan. Ini juga akan membahas tentang mengelola analisis kebutuhan di ruang kelas dan prosedur untuk melakukan analisis kebutuhan.*

*Kata kunci: Analisis kebutuhan, pengembangan kurikulum bahasa, desain kurikulum*

**INTRODUCTION**

Improving the quality of education is one important point planned by Indonesian government. In order to achieve the good quality of education, Indonesian educational system has set the goal to be achieved; as written in Indonesian constitution number 20, year 2003 about National Educational System,

*"The goals of national educational system are to develop learners' potentials to be faith person, have morality, healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens".*

To achieve the national educational goals set by Indonesian government, curriculum should be arranged and formulated strategically into certain programs. Curriculum development takes big part in deciding what should be put in an educational program. The main objective of curriculum development is to improve the quality of education and is not merely to produce teaching materials. The curriculum does not only pay attention to the development of the present but also directs attention to the future. The curriculum should always be updated in line with the changes of the world demand to keep it relevant to the dynamic and changing society. Therefore, Indonesian curriculum has changed for eleven times since the establishment; 1947 Curriculum, 1964 Curriculum, 1968 Curriculum, 1973 Curriculum, 1975 Curriculum, 1984 Curriculum, 1994 Curriculum, 1997 Curriculum, 2004 Curriculum or Competence – based Curriculum, 2006 Curriculum or School – based Curriculum, and the latest is 2013 Curriculum. The main reason of curriculum changing is as the revision, evaluation, and correction of the previous curriculum. In planning a curriculum, several aspects which should be included cover goals, materials, resources, learning activities and evaluation as the basis for establishing the curriculum.

With the purpose of formulating a well-developed curriculum, government need to understand the real condition of Indonesian Educational System happened in schools. Therefore, in order to understand the real condition of Indonesian schools, needs analysis can be done as one of the ways. The present study aims to investigate the role of needs analysis in curriculum design and materials development. Basic principles of language curriculum design are mentioned, and purposes of doing needs analysis in curriculum development are discussed. The target population and users of needs analysis are also defined.

Nation and Macalister (2010) have proposed twenty principles in language curriculum design. In general, Nation and Macalister divided the principles into three big groups; 1) Content and sequencing, 2) Format and presentation, and 3) Monitoring and assessment. These three groups represent the three major divisions of the central circle in the curriculum design diagram.

The first group of principles, which is content and sequencing, consist of frequency, strategies and autonomy, spaced retrieval, language system, keep moving forward, teachability, learning burden, and interference. The aim of these principles is to make sure that the learners are gaining something useful from the course.

The second group of principles is format and presentation. Principles included in this group are motivation, four strands, comprehensible input, fluency, output, deliberate learning, time on task, depth of processing, integrative motivation, and learning style. In general, these principles are

concerned with what actually happens in the classroom and during the learning. Most practically, they relate to the kinds of activities used in the course and the ways in which the learners process the course material. It is in this aspect of curriculum design that teachers may have their greatest influence on the course.

The third group of principles is monitoring and assessment, included ongoing needs and environment analysis and also feedback. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), regarding ongoing needs and environment analysis, the selection, ordering, presentation, and assessment of the material in a language course should be based on a continuing careful consideration of the learners and their needs, the teaching conditions, and the time and resources available. Nation and Macalister (2010) believe that this principle stresses the importance of doing needs analysis during the planning of a course.

**METHOD**
The research implies descriptive qualitative as the methodology. The aim of using descriptive qualitative is to represent and explain the data in complete and specific way.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**
Needs analysis is a preliminary step in designing a course which motivates the following course activities through its validity, reliability, and practicality, in relevance with Richards (2001) who stated that the first step in conducting a needs analysis is to decide exactly what its purpose or purposes are. Some purposes of needs analysis can be identified, those are:

- To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student.
- To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students.
- To determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills.
- To identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important.
- To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do.
- To collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.
- To compile a demographic profile of all the languages and language groups represented by the students.
- To assess their level of language acquisition in their native language and in English.
- To determine their communicative abilities in English.
- To determine their formal knowledge of English.
- To find out how students use language on a daily basis.
- To determine what English language skills are necessary to enable students to participate in school and community activities in English.
- To find out what prior experiences students have had with formal education.

- To determine the attitudes of the students and their families toward formal schooling and education.
- To find out what pre-literacy and literacy skills the students possess.
- To ascertain the students' level of cognitive development and acquisition of academic skills in their native language(s).
- To ascertain what cognitive and academic skills students have acquired in English.
- To determine the cultural, political, and personal characteristics of students.

Different purpose of needs analysis will include different users of needs analysis. For example, in conducting a needs analysis to help revise the secondary English curriculum in a country, the end users include curriculum officers in the ministry of education, who may wish to use the information to evaluate the adequacy of existing syllabus, curriculum, and materials; teachers who will teach from the new curriculum; learners, who will be taught from the curriculum; authors, who are preparing new textbooks; testing personnel, who are involved in developing end-of-school assessment; and staff of tertiary institutions, who are interested in knowing what the expected level will be of students existing the schools and what problems they face (Richards, 2001).

Curriculum development should be viewed as a process where the learners' needs leads to improvement of learners' learning. Therefore, curriculum developers should gather as much information as possible toward the learners' needs. This procedure used to collect information about the learners' needs is called as needs analysis. Needs analysis is defined as a family of procedures for gathering information about learners and about communication tasks (Nunan, 1988). In language teaching, needs analysis is the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities (Richards, 1992). It can also be explained as a systematic collection and analysis of all subjective and objective information necessary to define and validate defensible curriculum processes that satisfy the language learning requirements of students within the context of particular institutions that influence the learning and teaching situation (Brown, 1995). In needs analysis, process of collecting and analyzing information about learners is important in order to set goals and contents of a language curriculum based on their needs (Kayi, 2008). Needs analysis examines what learners already know and what they need to know (Nation & Macalister, 2010)

The moves of needs analysis in second language curriculum development emerged first in 1960s as language programs started emphasizing English for specific purposes instruction. From the l960s, the demand for specialized language programs grew and applied linguists increasingly began to employ needs analysis procedures in language teaching. By the 1980s, in many parts of the world a "needs-based philosophy" emerged in language teaching, particularly in relation to ESP and vocationally oriented program design. The data used for needs analysis can be conducted through questionnaires, personal interviews, documentation (gathering exam papers or text books and analyzing them), observation, and learners self assessment. The data gathered included the information about learners' previous experiences/ background knowledge, motivation,

availability, areas of improvement, needs, wants, lacks, learning (or teaching) styles & preferences, and beliefs of the learning process.

As stated above, needs analysis is a part of curriculum development and is normally required before a syllabus can be developed for language teaching. Curriculum development focuses on determining what knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measured and evaluated. The history of curriculum development in language teaching starts with the notion of syllabus design. Syllabus design is one aspect of curriculum development but is not identical with it. A syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction and lists what will be taught and tested. Thus the syllabus for a speaking course might specify the kinds of oral skills that will be taught and practiced during the course, the functions, topics or other aspects of conversations that will be taught, and the order in which they will appear in the course.

The learning process involves the consideration of such basic notions as syllabus and curriculum. The importance in differentiating between these two notions is based on the fact that different scholars present various viewpoints on this issue and in some cases these viewpoints are absolutely different (Nunan, 1993). According to Candlin (1984), "curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose, experience, evaluation, and the role and relationships of teachers and learners". Syllabus, on the contrary, is a notion, used for the smaller unit analysis, which is used for explaining the documents and records occurred at the classroom level. Syllabus is one of the ways to applying the already existing curriculum to the personal needs of teachers and learners. Nunan (1993) and Candlin (1984) refer curriculum to such particular processes as planning, plan implementation, evaluation, management, and administration. Thus, curriculum is a broad term, contrary to syllabus. Syllabus is a notion devoted to teaching methodology, mainly aimed at selecting and grading content (Nunan, 1993).

Johns (1991), considers the needs analysis as the first step in course design and believes it provides validity, reliability, and practicality for all subsequent course design activities. This information should include the desired outcomes or expectations of a high quality program, the role of assessment, the current status of student achievement and actual program content. The information should also consider the concerns and attitudes of teachers, administrators, parents and also the learners. While the data should include samples of assessments, lessons from teachers, assignments, scores on state standardized tests, the textbooks currently used, students' perception and feedback from parents. As for the feedback, based on Nation and Macalister (2010), learners should receive helpful feedback which will allow them to improve the quality of their language use.

In more applicable way, the needs analysis can be implied in Indonesian Educational System context. As it is known, Indonesian curriculum has changed for eleven times since the establishment; 1947 Curriculum, 1964 Curriculum, 1968 Curriculum, 1973 Curriculum, 1975 Curriculum, 1984 Curriculum, 1994 Curriculum, 1997 Curriculum, 2004 Curriculum or Competence – based Curriculum, 2006 Curriculum or School – based Curriculum, and the latest

is 2013 Curriculum. The current curriculum used, 2013 Curriculum, is the revised version of School – based Curriculum which consist of character building (religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, communicative, curiosity, nationality, peace-loving, social and environmental responsibility, and responsible) as the basic education. In language subject context, 2013 Curriculum focus on learning and using language as a media of communication to deliver idea and knowledge systematically, effectively, and logically. The statement before showed that 2013 Curriculum focuses on preparing students for facing the global era and ASEAN Economic Community by using 21st century skills such as communication skill and collaboration skill. In other way, the government tries to promote more communicative competence in the language teaching and learning process, as the main purpose of each language learning strategy is to be able to communicate with others using a language. The change of curriculum from 2006 Curriculum to 2013 Curriculum is caused by the world demand toward the graduates.

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In general, 2013 Curriculum contains four elements; (1) standard of graduate competencies, (2) standard of contents, (3) standard of learning process, and (4) standard of assessment. The elements included in the 2013 Curriculum are what it is already done during the needs analysis process. In School – based curriculum, the focus is in the lower order thinking or only remembering, as the stages focus only on exploration, elaboration, and confirmation. The learners are only asked to understand the concept. Meanwhile, world's demand toward the graduate is not enough only to make the learners able to understand the concept. The world needs people who can understand the concept and implement it in real life. Therefore, to fulfill the world's needs, needs analysis is done by the Indonesian ministry of education in order to build the best graduates who are able to compete in the 21st century. School – based curriculum are thought not enough to fulfill the world demand, therefore, 2013 Curriculum is made and used in Indonesia to complete the gap of 2006 Curriculum or School – based curriculum.

In standard of graduate competencies of 2013 Curriculum, students are expected to improve and to balance between the soft skills and hard skills which include aspects of competencies of attitudes (including: personal faith, morality, self-confident, and responsibility in interacting effectively with the social environment), skills (including having effective and creative thinking in the field of abstract and concrete domains), and knowledge (the ability to produce the knowledge, science,

technology, arts, and culture that are based on humanity, national, state, and civilization). These standards of graduate competencies are made after needs analysis done by the ministry of education, to see what the world and learners need to learn in school.

Standard of contents explain that the competencies shifted from the competencies which are originally derived from the subjects and turns into a subject which are developed from the competencies. Competences in the educational system are developed through the integrative thematic in all subjects at the elementary school level, subjects at the levels of junior high school and senior high school, and vocations at the level of vocational high school.

There are some changes in the standard of learning process using 2013 Curriculum. In the 2006 Curriculum or School – based Curriculum, standard process was initially focused on the exploration, elaboration, and confirmation. Meanwhile, in 2013 Curriculum, it adapt knowledge stages of Bloom Taxonomy, which are knowing, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Besides using Bloom Taxonomy, 2013 Curriculum also used Dyers's skill taxonomy and Krathwohl's attitude taxonomy. Dyers's taxonomy consists of observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, communicating, and creating; and for Krathwohl's attitude taxonomy it stages are accepting, responding, valuing, organizing/ internalizing, and characterizing/ actualizing. In 2013 Curriculum also, it is stressed that learning does not just happen in the classroom, but also in school and community environments. Teachers' role also shifted from the only source of learning to facilitator and guide; and attitudes, as the key point of 2013 Curriculum, are not taught verbally, but through example and role model.

2013 Curriculum indeed has used in Indonesia for some years. However, in its first launch, 2013 Curriculum created a controversy in its application. Official letter of Ministry of Education and Culture No: 1569228/MPK.A/KR/2013 on 8th November 2013 about 2013 Curriculum implementation among other things stated that; the Ministry of Education and Culture together with the Ministry of Religious Affairs will implement the Curriculum of 2013 at all educational unit: SD / MI Class I, II , IV , and V ; SMP / MTs class VII and VIII ; and SMA / MA / SMK / MAK class X and XI throughout Indonesia. The second notification about the application of 2013 Curriculum and 2014 / 2015 Academic calendar was on 10th July 2014. However this curriculum will be applied in the beginning of new school academic year which is on 14th July 2014. As we can see the range of time from the first notification to the implementation is too short for school to be ready. Even the issue is heard long time ago but still, schools need some times to be prepared. For comparison, Finland is a country that held first rank in terms of successful education. The data shows that Finland will have a reform national core curriculum in 2016. The highlight is the already finished it at the end of 2014. Means, the school and every school stake holders will have time approximately two years more or less to review on the newest curriculum.

The controversy of implementing a new curriculum back then was caused because the needs analysis is not conducted well. Back then, the implementation of Curriculum 2013 is still being done, while the supporting facilities are not ready yet. Therefore, it seemed that the implementation of the new curriculum is in a rush with unstructured evaluation. Ombudsman Republic of Indonesia (ORI) also give a critique notes to the government that proper implementation of the curriculum

in 2013 should not be held simultaneously in 2014 because it has not been evaluated and checked the results. Before it is implemented, the design of the curriculum needs to be tested and socialized openly at academic forums, which also involving other parties who have competence and capacity rate, including in it are groups of people educational actors. Open forum is very important, which have no purpose other than to also hold a comprehensive thinking to build a common understanding to invite the commitment of all components of society, especially those who will directly involve in the implementation.

In only one year and half, started from January 2013, 2013 Curriculum was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture to be used in all over Indonesia; as beforehand implemented in 6,221 chosen schools as a trial in July 2013. The survey had for the headmaster, teachers, parents, and students in the chosen school was only held once during the first implementation of 2013 Curriculum. There was no further evaluation after the new curriculum made was implemented, but the government kept insisting to use 2013 Curriculum as the new curriculum which should be applied in all over Indonesia.

The making of 2013 Curriculum was indeed in line with the changing of society which has high demand in facing global era, but the implementation of 2013 Curriculum in all over Indonesia was too early because the curriculum implemented before the evaluation of 2013 Curriculum seen from the idea, grand design, document related, until the effect of the implementation. As it is known that the main core of 2013 Curriculum is the integrated curriculum, thematic learning is the model of teaching learning process used. This thematic learning is applied not only in elementary school, but also in higher level of education. All subjects are designed to integrate each other and have basic competence which in line with the core competence; and also have to have cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competence in each subject. In 2013 curriculum, because the integrating of character building in teaching learning, especially nationality, Bahasa Indonesia is used as the communication tool and carrier of knowledge in the classroom.

Some constrains and problems always appear behind the implementation of the new curriculum. The problems appear are not only in the process of learning, but also in the subject taught, the material developed, the teaching methods used, and the assessment held. Using the new curriculum means changing the textbook used by the teachers and the students. During August 2014, when the 2013 Curriculum firstly implemented in all over Indonesia, the textbook used was not distributed yet in more than 60,000 schools in Indonesia. Per November 25th 2014, textbook for the first semester had not received by 19% regency for elementary school level, 32% regency for junior high school level, and 22% regency for senior high school and vocational school. The not – well distributed text book for the new curriculum showed that the preparation and implementation of the new curriculum is too early and short. Government need more time to be able to distribute the text book used to all over Indonesia and make sure that all parties who are going to use 2013 Curriculum already understand about the content of 2013 Curriculum.

The new text book used also consists of spiritual and affective competences interfere and disturb the substantial of learning and bring confusion and excessive burden for the teachers. Besides, the use of the same theme, same teaching method, and same learning material all over Indonesia as

the actualization of thematic learning is indicated not in line with the national educational system article 38, paragraph 2 which stated that elementary school and higher level school curriculum is developed based on its relevance according to the school under the coordination and supervision of Ministry of Education. The use of centralistic education as 2013 Curriculum is not fit with national educational system, as can be seen from the text book which uses the same theme all over Indonesia; students who live in mountain side will not understand when they have to learn with theme about coastal side, the students in big city will not understand when they have to learn about paddy field, so does the opposite. Moreover, in the new text book which uses 2013 Curriculum, it does not consist of example which can help both the teachers and students. As written in the general concept of 2013 Curriculum, that the text book consist of the stages of learning assessment start from the review, exercise, problem solving, challenge (critical thinking), and project (group work and collaboration to solve problems using various sources.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Needs analysis brings an important role in the process of designing and carrying out a language course in a curriculum development. The application of needs analysis during the teaching and learning process in a language course can help both the teacher and the learners. Needs analysis can help the teacher to figure out the students' needs, lacks, and wants. It is also important to find out the better idea about the teaching technique, strategies, or method to enhance the learners in the language learning process.

In Indonesia, needs analysis is usually conducted by Indonesian Ministry of Education and involve the teachers at schools. The data gathered by the teachers are then sent to Ministry of Education as a correction and improvement for Ministry of Education in the curriculum development. The needs analysis done is not published publicly because it is confidential; only the stakeholders involved in the needs analysis process such as the curriculum officers in Ministry of Education, the teachers, and program coordinator have the access to access the data. In general, needs analysis is used to gather the data about the learners' needs, lacks, and wants. It can be done through giving questionnaires, personal interviews, documentation (gathering exam papers or text books and analyzing them), observation, or learners self assessment using lists and scales.

In every curriculum applied in Indonesia, needs analysis always takes part in it. The use of needs analysis during the implementation of one curriculum is to see whether there are any lacks in the curriculum implemented. It is also used to maintain the learning process up to date and follow up the world demands toward graduates.

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