



A TASK-BASED SYLLABUS DESIGN
Evidence from tour guiding

Gusti Astika

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Dedicated to
my wife Indyah Sulistya Indraty
and
my daughters Arumdani & Ariya Diani
for their patience and support

Manfaat Buku ini

Buku ini dapat dipakai sebagai contoh penelitian kualitatif untuk mengajarkan mata kuliah metodologi penelitian dan contoh desain silabus khususnya untuk Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Salah satu perkembangan terkini dalam bidang pengajaran bahasa Inggris menunjukkan pentingnya silabus yang dirancang berdasarkan *task* dan buku ini menguraikan proses untuk merancang *task syllabus*. Pengetahuan tentang proses merancang *task syllabus* sangat dibutuhkan oleh lembaga-lembaga pendidikan yang mempunyai mata kuliah bahasa Inggris dalam kurikulumnya, misalnya Fakultas Sastra Jurusan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Profesional Jurusan Usaha Perjalanan Wisata, bahkan semua fakultas di perguruan tinggi yang ingin mengembangkan silabus bahasa Inggris yang sesuai dengan bidang studi.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the economic crisis that hit the country in 1998, the tourism education in Indonesia continues to flourish. It was estimated that the total number of tourism education programs has reached as many as 149 (Ernawati, 2000). These programs were established to meet the increasing demands of services in the tourism industry. They offer diploma programs of one to three years and upon graduation, the students will have the qualifications for jobs in the tourism industry. These programs have attracted many high school graduates to pursue skills and knowledge needed for their future jobs in the tourism industry. Since the 1998 crisis, the tourism industry has undergone a sharp decrease in international arrivals. In spite of the drop, the government is trying to promote Indonesian tourism and has identified it as one of the major source of the country's foreign exchange. With its prominent position in the country's economy, the tourism industry has to respond to the needs with quality services and professional personnel.

One of the challenges experienced by many teachers is developing the curriculum for English courses. According to Nunan (1988), curriculum development involves identifying learners' needs and purposes of learning, establishing learning goals and objectives, selecting and grading contents, organizing learning experiences, developing materials and assessment (p.4). According to this framework of curriculum development, syllabus development is part of curriculum activities that involves selection and grading of course contents.

In line with curriculum development, Gough (2000) argues that a curriculum has to take into account its relevance to the local needs. Imported or 'top-down' curriculum may not be relevant to the

local needs or specific group of students who have different ability levels and different needs from the 'original' country of the curriculum. Imported curriculum is good only in one context where the curriculum was designed. Therefore, a curriculum has to be locally designed and implemented. Teachers may design the syllabus in a team as the course progresses and the decision for syllabus contents may be based on the contents of textbooks currently in use and personal experiences of teachers. This fact points out to the need and importance of syllabus evaluation and review.

A syllabus may be designed to develop discrete language skills such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing. In addition, syllabus contents may not suggest topics or themes that are relevant to the needs in tourism or tour guiding. This can happen because the decision of syllabus contents may not be based on needs analysis in order to foster relevance to the needs of the students as prospective workforce in the tourism industry in general and tour guiding in particular. Therefore, it is important that the design of an English syllabus is based on empirical findings by identifying the kinds of tasks carried out in the target setting, the topics discussed in the tasks, as well as relevant language functions that are necessary to carry out the tasks. Target setting is the place where tour guiding is carried out. The insights gained from the task analysis in the target setting can be used as bases for the design of a syllabus type that is relevant to the learners' needs. For this purpose, a task syllabus is suitable because 'task' is the basis for determining the syllabus items. This can be realized if a needs analysis is carried out in order to find out what kinds of tasks tour guides carry out in tour guiding and what language skills are necessary in order to accomplish the tasks effectively. Needs analysis is important in order to identify the kinds of tasks and establish syllabus relevance. A lack of relevance could result in a lack of qualified work force needed in

the development of the tourism industry. The growth of tourism industry necessitates skilled personnel and this, to a certain extent, puts pressure to tourism education to continually carry out program evaluation in which syllabus is one component of the overall curriculum activities.

The discussion above points to the need for an appropriate syllabus which can provide students with more relevant programs. With the background mentioned above, it deems necessary to find out the kinds of language tasks carried out in tour guiding, language functions that are required, and how tasks vary according to the settings. Within each task, what topics are important and what aspects are considered important in presenting the topics. Information gained from such analyses could provide ideas for an English syllabus that is meeting the real needs of the students.

A well-designed and relevant syllabus can provide students with relevant knowledge and skills needed in the job market. At the program level, this kind of syllabus can provide the teachers with insights to develop their professional skills in teaching the language and in planning program evaluation. At the institutional level such a syllabus is also significant because it assures institution's accountability and provide the students with more relevant knowledge and skills.

This book is an edited version of my dissertation for my Doctorate degree at Linguistics Department, Post Graduate Program, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisors: Prof. Dr. Thomas Sumarno, M.Pd., Prof. Dr. Joko Nurkamto, M.Pd., and Prof. H. B. Sutopo, MSc., Ph.D. who assisted me in completing the dissertation. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. H.D. Edi Subroto, Head of Linguistics Department, for the opportunity and support given to me to finish my dissertation. To the tour guides and the staff of Satriavi Travel Agency in Denpasar, Bali, I would like to offer my

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