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Examining the Approaches to Syllabus Design in English Language Teaching in Indonesia

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Abstract

The main purpose of this article is to examine critically the recent approaches in syllabus design. The role of the syllabus in foreign language teaching is to describe, distinguish and to implement the six major types of syllabi in various teaching situations. A review of the literature on six different syllabus types is done as part of an analysis of foreign language syllabus design, and the method for selecting and integrating syllabi for use in the classroom is covered as well. These six syllabus types; structural, notional-functional, situational, skill-based, task-based, and content-based are distinguished from one another by giving more attention to language practice and less attention to language form. Each idea is reviewed, along with the potential applications for each type. The designers cover the criteria for selecting a syllabus type as well as different combinations and implementation strategies in a program for teaching foreign languages. Because there is a wealth of literature on the subject and it is simple to extrapolate it to education in other languages, the discussion is centered on teaching English as a foreign language.

Keywords: Syllabus Design, English as Foreign Language, Language Teaching

Introduction

There is a significant interest and movement about the teaching and learning of foreign languages. In the twentieth century experienced the growth and decrease of several language teaching approach. In the past, the activity of learning a foreign language directly implicated understanding a large number of complex grammatical rules. This was synchronous with the development of translation skills into and out of the foreign language. However, when the audio-lingual approach surfaced, language learning substituted habit formation as the primary method of language acquisition but it fell short of expectations. This caused a significant deal of concerns with the styles of language instruction.

In the previous, it was believed that teaching had to be established to be scientific, and that this could only be managed by connecting it to psychology and linguistics. The resultant ideas were blindly adhered to, while the reality of the actual teaching and learning scenario were disregarded. When individuals concerned in adhering to the principles were aware of the situation, it produced a great deal of unease. Then, it became apparent that language education required its own body of theory that was less dependent on linguistics and psychology. This requirement necessitated a more adaptable approach to language education strategies and techniques. There was a heightened interest in the learning-teaching settings and in the individual students. The need appeared to "develop a taxonomy of language teaching techniques without assuming which techniques should be employed for a particular objective" so that experience and research could "attempt to establish the advantage of various combinations of techniques for given objectives, types of learners, and specified learning situations" (Stern, 1983). In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of individuals who demand languages for occupational and vocational purposes, as well as for educational objectives. This has needed a similar increase in focus on syllabus design in order to deliver suitable education programs.

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The current trend in the theory of language is a focus on communicative rather than linguistic competence and performance. As a result, language program designers have changed their focus from "content," which traditionally referred to grammar and vocabulary, to "objectives." These objectives refer to other variables besides linguistic material. The theory of language, the theory of learning, and the learner type are features of language teaching method that are connected to the syllabus. The choice of a syllabus should take all three factors into consideration. Moreover, to design a syllabus is to select what is delivered and in what sequence. Therefore, the language theory either implicitly or explicitly behind the approach will play a significant influence on the proposed syllabus. A theory of learning will also play an important role in influencing the selection of the syllabus. For example, a teacher may accept a structural theory of language but not the concept that students may acquire language materials in proper grammatical order. While the fundamental approach to language may be structure, the syllabus is more situational or even content-based throughout this case. Student character can be another issue in the selection of a syllabus. Learner types can be observed in terms of cognitive activity, lifestyle, goals, career, educational and social backgrounds, etc. (Krahnke, 1987).

The design of a syllabus is a crucial decision in language teaching, and it should be decided with as much awareness and knowledge as possible. There are six types of language education curriculum, according to Krahnke (1987). In this article, six different type of language education syllabus are presented as though they were "pure," but, they rarely appear independently of one another. The significant majority of current language syllabus are a combination of two or more of the types described here. One type of syllabus often dominates for a given course, but other types of content may be integrated with it. Moreover, the six categories of syllabus are not separate from one another. The distinction between skill-based and task-based syllabus, for example, may be minor. In such situations, the defining characteristic is frequently the instructional content's application in the actual teaching technique. Individual syllabi are described in terms of their characteristics, differences, strengths, and limitations as follows.

1. A structural syllabus. Typically grammatical, the forms and structures of the language being taught provide the content of language instruction. Examples inlude nouns, verbs, adjectives, statements, questions, subordinate sentences, and so on.
2. A notional/functional curriculum. The content of language instruction consists of the functions that are completed when language is used or the concepts that language is used to communicate. Examples of functions include informing, agreeing, apologizing, and asking; include size, age, color, comparison, and time, among others.
3. A situational syllabus. The content of language instruction is a collection of real-world or made-up contexts in which the target language is either seen or utilized. In most cases, a situation contains a number of individuals who are taking part in an endeavor while situated in a certain environment. The language that is being used in this case serves multiple purposes, all of which come together to form a coherent snippet of credible dialogue. The basic objective of a situational language instruction syllabus is to teach the language that is used in contexts. Sometimes the situations are designed to be purposefully relevant to the present or future demands of the language learners. This supports the objective of preparing them to use the new language in the kinds of situations that compose the syllabus. Examples are going to the pharmacies, purchasing a book at the bookstore, meeting a new student, and asking for directions and so on.
4. A skill-based syllabus. The subject matter of language instruction is a compilation of specific skills that may play a role in language use. People need to be able to perform certain things in order to be competent in a language, and these things should be able to be done relatively independently of the context in which the language may be used. These things are referred to as skills. Skill-based syllabi group linguistic abilities (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, sociolinguistic, and discourse) together into generalized patterns of behavior. These behaviors include things like listening to spoken language for the main idea, writing well-formed paragraphs, giving successful oral presentations, taking language tests, reading texts for primary ideas or supporting details, and so on. Situational syllabus group functions together into specific situations of language usage. The

acquisition of a particular language skill is the fundamental objective of training that is skill-based. The acquisition of a more general competence in the target language as a secondary goal, with the acquisition of any additional information occurring purely by accident during the process of applying language skills, is one possibility.

5. A task-based syllabus. The curriculum consists of a variety of challenging tasks with clear goals that the students need or would like to do by using new language. The tasks are characterized as activities with a goal other than language acquisition, the performance of the tasks is treated in a way that is designed to build second language ability. This is similar to the method taken in a content-based syllabus. The performance of a task comes first, then language acquisition, and language teaching only happens when it is necessary. Language abilities are integrated into tasks, which take place in specific contexts in which language is used. The objective of task-based instruction is to educate students how to draw on a variety of resources in order to finish a piece of work, as opposed to the objective of situation-based instruction, which is to teach students the particular linguistic content that occurs in the situation (a specified result). Task-based instruction is distinct from situation-based instruction in this respect (a process). When completing the activities, the students draw on a wide array of language forms, functions, and skills, and they do so in a manner that is frequently unique to them and unpredictable. For the most part, tasks that can be employed for language learning are tasks that the learners already have to complete. examples; Applying for a job, and other similar activities.
6. A content-based-syllabus. Teaching language by its content focuses on imparting knowledge, although teaching language through its tasks emphasizes the student's ability to communicate and think critically. A classroom that is instructed in the language that the students require or desire to learn, potentially with some linguistic adjustments to make the science more understandable, is an illustration of content-based language instruction.

The six types of syllabi are described from most structured to most language based. Most language instruction focuses form or meaning. These categories rarely exist separately. Most language instruction syllabuses combine two or more of these types.

Types of Syllabi

A structural syllabus

A theory of language serves as the foundation for the structural syllabus. This theory of language operates under the presumption that the grammatical or structural aspects of language form are the most fundamental or helpful. When the ability to use or communicate in the new language is the goal of instruction, one can say that the structural syllabus embraces a theory of learning that maintains functional ability emerges from structural knowledge or ability. This is because functional ability is the ability to use or communicate in the new language. The teaching is characterized in terms of the form, which corresponds to the content of the structural syllabus, which is form of the language, especially grammatical form. The standard grammatical categories include nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, singulars, plurals, present tense, past tense, and so on and so forth. The sentence has typically been regarded as the primary focus area for structural syllabuses. To put it another way, the phrase is the greatest unit of discourse that is typically dealt with.

In general, a classification of sentence types will include types defined semantically such as statements or declaratives, types defined grammatically such as simple, compound, and complex sentences, and types defined grammatically such as interrogatives, questions, exclamations, and conditional sentences. A significant amount of morphology can also be found in structural syllabi, such as s in gul a r and plural marking, the forms identifying the tense system of the language, and specific morphology such as det erm iners and articles, prepositions and postpositions, gender markers, and so on. Morphology is also concerned with vocabulary, more specifically formal characteristics of words like prefixes and suffixes.

One of the most important aspects of the structural curriculum is that it is "synthetic" (Wilkins, 1976; Yalden, 1983). Studies of the language (the content) are required to be completed for synthetic syllabi. Examples of these analyses are word frequency counts, grammatical analysis, and discourse analysis. The content of the syllabus is put together by the designer of the syllabus using the components that were singled out as a consequence of the analyses. In the majority of situations, there exist rules, patterns, and grammatical aspects, and there are typically instructions for how their combination and application should take place.

Structural syllabi, due to their synthetic character, presume a general theory of learning that holds that students can synthesis the material being taught in at least two different ways. First, the information that was analyzed, which includes the patterns and rules, is made available to the learner as the student works on utilizing them in linguistic communication. The knowledge is utilized by the student in one of two ways: either to create new speech or discourse, or to evaluate the quality of previously generated speech. Next, the information that has been examined is changed from analyzed knowledge, which may be conscious, into the primarily unconscious behavior that constitutes grammar rules.

A notional/functional curriculum

The most well-known syllabus type used in modern language instruction is the notional/functional syllabus. Although notional/functionalism has occasionally been referred to as a "method" (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Widdowson, 1979), it has never been regarded as anything other than a sort of language instruction content that may be taught using a variety of classroom teaching strategies. What has been referred to as "communicative language instruction" (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Widdowson, 1979) is a very nebulous concept of language teaching that has been referred to as a technique but is actually a collection of different approaches and processes clustered around notional/functional material.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), notional/functionalism is a philosophy of language at its most basic level. According to this theory, language's applications are fundamental. If language is thought of as a relationship between form and function, notional/functionalist theory places the function side of the equation first and the form side of the equation second. In a functional view of language, concepts like the future and functions like promising are considered basic, and the future tense form is discussed as one way of realizing these notions and functions. For example, rather than considering the future tense form (with will) in English as basic and discussing the uses to which it can be put (e.g., talking about the future, making promises). The most fundamental aspect of the notional/functionalism trend in language education is that categories of language use rather than categories of language form have been taken as the organizing premise for instruction. Other interpretations and implementations have expanded on this idea.

A situational syllabus

Although the situational syllabus has a long history in language training, the majority of the time, situational information has only been utilized as an adjunct to instruction that is primarily focused on the form and structure of the language. A wide variety of methods, ranging from grammar-translation to Berlitz to contemporary integrated textbooks, have made use of examples of the language being taught being utilized in contexts and circumstances. These might be as brief as dialogues or as extensive as themes with large casts of actors acting and behaving in a variety of complicated ways. Many compilations of conversational or communicative activities are structured according to the scenarios they address.

It is crucial to recognize that there are multiple situational syllabi, separated by the sort of informational and linguistic content. Alexander (1976) identified three distinct categories of situational syllabi, each of which was separated by the type of material presented: "limbo," "concrete," and "mythical." The setting is irrelevant in a limbo situation. Alexander uses the example of introductions at a party to illustrate that the environment of the party is mostly inconsequential, and that what is significant is the particular language focus that is being involved in the introductions. The actual scenario is one in which the situations are

implemented in opposition to specific contexts (on page 98), the context and the language that is used in conjunction with it are what are considered to be the most crucial aspects.

The grammatical focus is one of the several linguistic focuses that can be found in situations. With this focus, events are presented in such a way that particular structures or sets of structures are highlighted. It is easy to conceive of a pronunciation focus that places an emphasis on certain difficulties associated with pronunciation. Another type of concentration is called a lexical focus, and it places more of an emphasis on a certain word set. Last but not least, different kinds of discourse and interactional phenomena can be fabricated through the construction of settings. Another method to identify situational syllabi is to think about whether or not students are given ready-made discourse to work from, or if they are expected to generate substantial new content from scratch. Students are instructed to act out a number of events using their own language and, presumably, locations once they have seen them fully presented. In contrast hand, role plays can be used to show scenarios in which the students are responsible for generating or providing much of the conversation.

A skill-based syllabus

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the four pillars of language education, and the term "skill" has traditionally been used to identify one of these modalities (Chastain, 1976). Therefore, the phrase refers to a narrower sense of what goes into language instruction. For this article, a simple definition of skill is a specific way of using language that combines structural and functional ability but exists outside of specific settings or situations. Listening to foreign radio broadcasts for news, taking orders in a restaurant, and so on are all examples of specialized listening abilities. Skimming and scanning text are also examples of specialized reading skills. Competency-based education provides a more conventional lens through which to examine training in a particular skill. Similar to behavioral objectives, competencies describe what a student is capable of doing after receiving instruction.

Language proficiency in general is a prerequisite for using language in specific contexts and registers, although experience and the need for such abilities also play a role. It's possible that linguistic abilities are only applicable in particular contexts. There are a lot of waiters and waitresses working in restaurants, along with other workers who do tasks that are very similar, who have merely mastered the English skills necessary to do their duties in the restaurant. They are now proficient in a certain aspect of the second language. Teaching students specific skills like taking notes, writing formal papers, and skimming and scanning while reading is a common part of preparing students for higher education in a second language.

A task-based syllabus

Krahke (1981, 1982), Candlin and Murphy (1986), and Johnson's work, as well as other authors, served as the foundation for the task-based syllabus (1982). The utilization of tasks that students are required to complete outside of the classroom for purposes other than education as learning opportunities is the defining characteristic of content that is based on tasks. In contrast to other types of activities, tasks are distinguished by the fact that they are intended to produce a measurable result and have a function that is not educational. In the classroom, real-world scenarios can be brought to life through the use of tasks.

There are some similarities between task-based learning and situational learning; however, with task-based learning, the students themselves generate the content of the circumstances. In addition, tasks are not static; rather, they should involve a process that involves the generation and processing of knowledge. In addition to this, they should provide informational material that the language students are not familiar with at the outset of the job. The student is required to apply cognitive processes of evaluation, selection, combination, modification, or supplementation (so-called "higher-order thinking skills") to a combination of new and previously learned information in order to complete the assignment. This is another characteristic of tasks. Language is not taught as such in task-based instruction; rather, it is provided as and when it is required for the successful task to be completed.

Students might create a guidebook to their school or teaching program for other students. Students may be assigned to work on a paper or report in a school environment, which may ultimately be required

for a certain content-area subject. Students who are just starting out in their academic careers could confront the application process for a job or a program, which includes gathering the essential forms and information to finish the procedure.

The purpose of task-based learning is to provide learners with the motivation they need through its immediacy and relevance by using the learner's actual life requirements and activities as learning experiences. The emphasis placed on the interactional processing of both new and previously acquired information serves to stimulate transfer. Language use is the primary means by which linguistic form is acquired. Task-based learning is structurally designed for language learning or acquisition because the activities in a language learning environment or program are selected in part for what they will contribute to language development and are administered in a way that maximizes experience and feedback. The language that is required to complete tasks is not provided or taught in advance; rather, pupils are tasked with figuring it out on their own, with guidance from teachers and other resources when the activity is completed.

A content-based-syllabus

The concept behind content-based teaching is straightforward: it refers to the process of imparting knowledge or information to students in the target language while making little to no attempt to teach the language itself in isolation from the material that is being covered. In practice, many programs that take a content-based approach have also included an instructional component that expressly focuses on the target language. However, this type of specific language instruction is not recognized as the key contributor to acquisition of the target language.

New approaches to teaching material are connected with broader efforts to improve education for English language learners (LEP) in public schools in the United States and Canada. One approach that has been taken to address the issue of inadequate school-based language competency is the implementation of some form of managed immersion in the language of the society or the school. The term "immersion" refers to the practice of providing pupils with subject matter instruction in a language that the students may not be able to govern very well or at all; in other words, they simply attend school in that language. Immersion, when carried out in a responsible and well-informed manner, has the potential to maximize students' comprehension of both the target language and the subject matter being studied.

Experimental studies conducted in Canada have demonstrated immersion's promise (Lambert S. Tucker, 1972). Students were enrolled in this research program beginning at the kindergarten level and were given the opportunity to participate in school topic classes that were instructed in languages other than their first. The findings of the study showed that the children had learnt not only the subject matter being taught but also the language in which it was being presented, and that such an experience did not slow down the students' cognitive growth in any way.The existence of evidence such as this, coupled with the fact that large numbers of children in both the United States and Canada do not speak English, provided support for the implementation of bilingual education programs in both countries as a potential solution to the issue of how to educate children who are unable to communicate in the language used in the educational system.

The goals of bilingual education programs have traditionally been to keep students who speak a non-dominant language in school, to ensure that their cognitive development continues at an acceptable rate, and to provide students with the ability to communicate in a community language in which they did not previously have proficiency, with the end goal of achieving bilingualism whenever possible. When used in this context, the term "syllabus" does not relate to a document that directs the instruction of a particular language course; rather, it refers to a more abstract concept of the various categories of subject matter that are included in the instruction of languages as well as the foundations upon which language courses are structured.

Choosing and Integrating syllabus

There were six types of content on the syllabus that were defined and talked about as ideal or single types. It is not very common for one kind of curriculum or topic to be used exclusively over others in

practical classroom situations, although it does happen occasionally. Syllabi or content categories are typically combined in more or less integrated ways, with one type serving as the organizing foundation around which the others are structured and related. For instance, the majority of courses taught in foreign languages are structured around a structural syllabus, with each unit or chapter concentrating on a different set of grammatical characteristics. Moreover, in addition to the grammatical emphasis and organization, there are also other sorts of content, which are typically either situational or functional.

The aims and objectives of the overall educational program should serve as the primary criterion for selecting the sort of syllabus to be used when teaching a second language. This refers to the kind of knowledge or behavior that should be achieved as a result of the training. This obvious fact has not been acknowledged in a consistent manner.The instructional resources that are at a teacher's disposal are yet another component that will play a role in determining the kind of curriculum that can be chosen. The term "resources" can refer to a variety of different things, including things like time, textbooks and other materials, visuals (films, slides, and pictures), realia, and outside-of-classroom resources like other speakers of the language, radio and television programs, films, field trips, and so on. Resources can also include realia, such as objects that are used in the classroom.

The need of making the teaching responsible to authorities or measurable by external measures—typically tests—could be a final component of the program that has an impact on the selection of instructional content. It is a well-known fact that the substance of education can be influenced by testing in some way. If a certain body of information is going to be assessed, teachers and instructional programs will frequently gear their lessons toward imparting that information to students, even when it is possible that the information is not what the pupils actually want.

The course material that will be covered in language classes is something that is partially decided upon by the teachers. It is a general rule in education that teachers will teach what they themselves are most familiar with. If a teacher is not knowledgeable with the formal characteristics of a language, it is unlikely that they will attempt to teach a lesson on grammar. Instead, such a teacher may choose to concentrate on the social uses (functions) of language or how it is utilized in a variety of contexts. On the other hand, a science teacher who has one student in the class who does not speak the language being spoken in the classroom might decide to proceed with teaching science in the most effective way possible (content instruction) rather than attempting to provide the student with a specialized language lesson. Some study on teacher practice reveals that language teachers do not accurately describe their own practice (Long & Sato, 1983), have contradictory and inconsistent ideas about language teaching (Krahnke & Knowles, 1984), and have a tendency to replicate their own experiences as students when they become teachers. As a consequence of this, teachers are able to have a significant impact on the actual curriculum used in their classrooms, even if the official or overt syllabus utilized by the program is quite different.

The students' aims for language learning will align with the program's objectives. This makes setting goals easier. Furthermore, there are situations when students and the programs they are participating in have different goals. At a vocational school, for instance, one of the instructional programs was developed to teach students the English that is required for the broadcasting profession. The supervisors of the program made the assumption that the students' objectives for their language acquisition were connected to the professional training that they were getting. Furthermore, the students were more interested in improving their general English skills in order to position themselves for jobs that were even more desirable than the ones they were already being trained for. Along with the more specialized skill and structure information that was being taught, increasing the amount of general functional, situational, and skill content that was offered could be one method to satisfy both sets of goals. The goals of the students, their experiences, expectations, and previous knowledge, as well as the social and personality types of the students, as well as the quantity of students in a specific class, are the primary issues here.

The various forms of syllabi have been talked about in a manner that is more or less idealistic and independent, considering each type as though it were the only type being implemented in the classroom. In reality, however, relatively few educational systems simply use a single type and instead integrate types in a variety of different ways. Although not absolute, combination and integration are different. When many

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curricular approaches are merged into one, little effort is made to establish connections between the various subject areas. Integration occurs whenever there is an attempt made to interrelate several pieces of content. Combining two or more things into one is plainly a simpler and less challenging task than integrating them. Integration may appear to be the preferred method to use many forms of curriculum or content, and in some respects, this image is accurate. It is likely that training that is not segmented into separate compartments, but rather instruction that builds upon and makes connections between the many forms of curriculum and subject, is more effective. It's possible that discrete combinations are better than fully integrated syllabi in situations where specific knowledge and behavior results are sought after.

The materials that can be used to create practical language instruction syllabi are outlined in this article, along with some of the limitations that come with making selections and putting them together. It should be obvious at this point that there is no one form of content that is suitable for all types of educational environments. Furthermore, the requirements and conditions of each educational environment are so uniquely specific that it is impossible to provide specific recommendations for combination. In addition, the procedure of planning and carrying out the actual contents of a syllabus is substantial enough to merit its own volume.

There are ten steps involved in the process of putting together a syllabus for teaching a practical language:

1. Figure out, to the best of your ability, what outcomes are wanted for the kids who are participating in the educational program. To put it another way, you should be as specific and attainable as you can when defining what the students should be able to achieve as a direct result of the education they received.
2. Arrange the many types of syllabi that are provided in this article according to the chance that they will result in the outcomes that are intended. If the results are complicated, it's possible that many ranks will be required.
3. Assess the resources that are available in terms of expertise (for teaching, needs analysis, material choice and production, etc.), materials, and training for instructors.
4. Arrange the courses in order of priority with regard to the resources at your disposal. That is, determine which types of syllabi would be the easiest to execute given the resources that are at your disposal.
5. Contrast the lists that were created under numbers 2 and 4. Create a new ranking based on the restrictions placed on the available resources, making sure to make as few changes as possible to the earlier list.
6. Perform the process once more while keeping in mind the limitations caused by the issues relating to the instructor and the students that were discussed earlier.
7. Determine an overall ranking by taking into account all of the information that was generated in the previous phases.
8. Designated one or two types of syllabi as the primary ones, and one or two as the secondary ones.
9. Consider the issue of combining or integrating different types of syllabi, and decide how the combination will be accomplished and in what proportion it will be implemented.
10. Implement the decisions by creating practical instructional units.

Conclusion

This is a guide for determining syllabus decisions for certain instructional programs. It is reasonable to anticipate that rather distinct designs will emerge for each application, and this is exactly how things need to go. When it comes to making judgments that are practical regarding the design of a syllabus, it is essential to take into account any and all elements that could possibly have an effect on the teachability of the syllabus. At the level of the program is the only place where this is possible.

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