

THE PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAMME (AN EMPIRICAL STUDY)

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Abstract

In the language learning process, problems that often appear are a few things related to the uniqueness and complexity of the problem not only lies in their own language, but also in the learning process. Language has a wide range of dimensions relating to the linguistic dimension, culture, social, personal, and other characteristics. On the other hand, study has wide range of dimensions, both in relation to teachers, students, facilities, media, purpose, or relating to the dimensions of the process, starting from planning, implementation, until the evaluation. To expand the study, this article tries to formulate the pattern of development for language learning program with the aim of emphasizing on methodological aspects as well as on other aspects related to the content of language.

Keywords: uniqueness of language; dimension of linguistic: the dimension of learning process

A. Introduction

In the learning process, learning outcome is a must achieved goal. Learning outcome is often problematic because it is not in accord with the aims or the set of standard. There are various factors that affect learning outcomes, such as environment, materials, processes, facilities or means of learning. The main issue that always related with learning outcomes is the learning process. There is an assumption that quality learning outcomes can only be achieved through the quality learning process. This is true because if the process of learning is not

optimal; therefore it is difficult to expect a good and quality learning outcome. Therefore, the subject matter of the quality of learning outcomes lies so much in the process of learning.

The learning process is closely related to learning objectives. In the learning process, the aims of learning are the centre of each learning objectives. According to Sukmadinata (2004: 176), in order for effective learning process attain the objectives, it is must be supported by the approach and models aspects or appropriate learning methods, characteristics of subjects, students' and teachers' abilities. This is very important, because these aspects will provide a significant convenience for the creation of effective teaching-learning process.

In language learning, these components will be able to improve and enhance the quality of the learner's learning outcomes. Adequate characteristics of a language, demands the capacity and ability for its users (stakeholders), both for the sake of the environment itself. For example language education in schools, it caters not only for the benefits inside the education but also to cater the interests outside of education such as in companies or other related places.

The demands of learning outcomes are very reasonable, not only because of the demands of the National Education System with regards to standards of quality, but also the demands of the job market that provide competitive opportunities for language graduates. In addition, in terms of current development of education, the demands of language skills are important in order to access a variety of useful information.

These conditions allow the experts to plan and to formulate a curriculum design that can accommodate the needs of learners. Good language curriculum should be able to increase the motivation of learners by taking into account the content and the suitable learning materials that is in accord with the demands and needs of the field. Content or learning materials need to be looked in a way, so that learning can effectively be applied in various fields of activities, either verbal or written.

Looking at the growth of qualifications, particularly within the setting of educational, therefore the whole field of study (without exception) are required to conform to the standards of education quality in their respective fields, including the areas of language study, both the mother tongue (Indonesian language) as well as foreign language (German, Arabic, Japanese, French, etc.). To achieve the standard quality, various devices are required, especially with regard to the learning process.

The learning process is implemented using the principles of learning development that includes the selection of materials, strategies, media, evaluation, and learning resources. The achievement of learners can be seen in its ability to accomplish the tasks in accordance with the standards of competence and specific procedures.

In the context of language learning, principles of learning is embraced through the mastering of the language skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. The issue here is how to develop a language learning program so that the language skills can be mastered?

B. Problem Statement

This paper initiates from the problems related to language learning program in the context of language skills that are still not optimal. So far the learning programs have not contributed to the ability of language learners that reflect the competencies as expected. The data from the research at several universities in Indonesia are as follows. Speaking ability in term of performance on foreign language index: Index: Indonesian Education University(UPI) average of 2.75, Yogyakarta State University: 2.70; Surabaya State University: 2.68; Medan State University: 2.73. (Mahfuddin: 2009: 114)

There are a number of variables relates to learning programmes from the aspects of language skills. As for raw input variables, it is in the form of students while for the instrumental inputs are curriculum, learning materials and programs, methods and techniques , instructional media, and others. As for those that relates to environmental inputs are the learning environment, families, communities, facilities and infrastructure.

One of the aspects that need to be considered is the implementation of learning process that purportedly very influential on the outcome of language learning. The assumption is that the quality of the learning process is the determine factor towards the quality of learning outcomes. Starting from this assumption, hence the question arises: what kind of implementation of learning process that must be used in improving the quality of students with regard to language skills?

To answer these questions, a move that needs to be done is to put the learning process in the context of the variables forming the learning activities based on a particular paradigm. In general, the approach used for mapping of the above variables is the system approach. The systems approach is concerned with the components involved, namely the input, process and output. With reference to the mapping proposed Dunkin and Biddle (1975: 52) the position of the learning program in improving language skills in the context of the variables forming the learning program is obtained as follows:

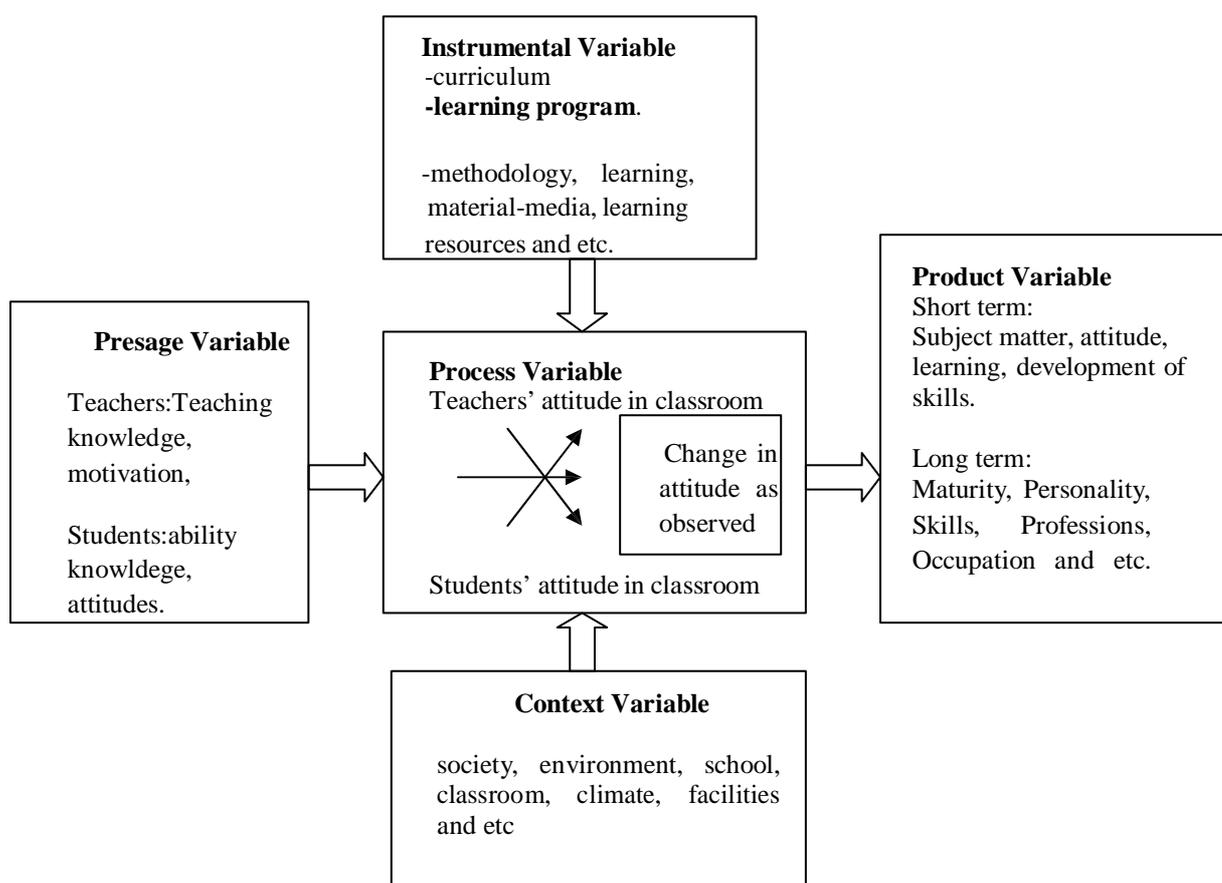


Figure 1
Variables Establishment of Learning Program
(Adapted from Dunkin Biddle, 1975)

From this description, the presage variable is related to raw input variables, where the background of teachers' teaching skills and the ability of learners are in it. The determine factors in the learning process are the skills of teachers, attitudes, motivation and intelligence. The same goes to the initial ability of students, both the knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and so forth.

Instrumental variables are those related to the aspects of curriculum, learning programs, materials, learning resources, media and so forth, all of which can affect the learning process variables. Context variables with respect to environment aspects can also affect the learning process variables, while products variables related to output is expected, both short and long term. Reigeluth (1983: 20) puts this product as an indicator variable for the effectiveness and efficiency of learning activities.

C. Discussion

In the context of language, instructional design is closely related with the context of language, the nature of language and learning, and the pattern for the development of language learning program. Therefore in this discussion, it is important to reveal the research based on the above matter.

1. Understanding the Meaning of Language Proficiency

Language skills refer to the two main aspects, namely 1) the physical and psychological aspects of language, and 2) the accuracy aspects of using the language, both spoken and written. Physical and psychological aspects of language focused on the ability to choose the word, use it and put it in written and spoken language. The psychology of language (spoken language) refers to the condition of psychological personality in establishing contact with the speaker. While the second aspect refers to the accuracy of using the language with respect to both spoken and written precisely, clearly and in accordance with the rules of language (pragmatic language).

Alwasilah (2000: 178) suggests that the physical and psychological aspects in language refers to matters that related to personality, appearance, style, quality of sound (such as speed, clarity, and choice of words), and the skills to develop contacts. On the other hand, aspects of fluency refer to the ability of using the language in general (such as requesting, ordering, ask, repeat, etc.).

The statement above shows that language skills closely related to the thought processes that underlie language. Coaching language skill also means practicing thinking skills. The accuracy of choosing and using words, as well as the fluency in speaking (spoken language), show a pattern and a systematic way of thinking.

Alvesson in Bryman (2002: 68) views language skills as a firm empirical phenomenon, reliable, and can be studied. It is productive, functional, interactive and contextual, depending on the nature of language use. Language skills display the ability to use language appropriately and correctly in accordance with its function as a medium of communication.

In this paper, language skills refer to the ability to speak or to use language appropriately and correctly, both spoken and written. It is because language skills consists of listening, speaking, reading and writing, hence language skills also refers to the ability in listening, speaking, proficiency in reading and writing skills through the language used.

These four skills are grouped into two categories. Reading and listening skills are grouped under receptive and appreciative categories, while speaking and writing skills, are grouped under the productive and expressive language skills. These four skills are unified and integrated with each other.

From the views above, it can be concluded that the language skills is the ability to understand, mastering, and applying the language in accordance with the rules and functions. It is practical, active, productive, and interactive, as described by Alvesson (Bryman 2002: 68) above. For clarity, the four language skills can be mapped in the following chart:

<p>Reading Receptive Appreciative Indirectly</p>	<p>Communication Face to Face</p>	<p>Speaking Productive Expressive Directly</p>
<p>Language Skills</p>		
<p>Listening Receptive Appreciative Directly</p>	<p>Communication Not facing each other</p>	<p>Writing Productive Expressive Indirectly</p>

Figure 2

Language Skills and the relationship with each other

2. Understanding the nature of language in the Learning of Language

Generally, language is a communication tool used by humans in a social interaction. Language is also a means to express a thought or an idea, or opinion including the physical and psychological aspects.

Gross (1988: 20) defines the language (Sprache) at least into 15 terminologies, namely 1) language as a tool to think and act; 2) language is true from the thought (Marx), 3) language is the common expression that can be done collectively in a particular language, 4) language is a habit (Bloomfield); 5) language is a number of expressions (Chomsky); 6) language is a major sign system; 7) language is a sign of the conventional system; 8) language is a system of rules (von Regeln system); 9) language is the main code (Primaerkode) of existing signs and rules of combination; 10) language is a tool of understanding; 11) language is the most important means of communication; 12) language is a form of social action (soziale Handelns); 13) language is a fundamental tool in controlling the action; 14) language is a system structure as a regular form of action, and 15) language is symbolic interaction.

From few notions of language above, one of the general and popular meanings is language is a communication tool that is used in social situations, both spoken and written.

Communication is a process of interaction between individuals who are communicating. Response arising from the communications receiver has become the stimulus for the communicator to respond back. Therefore, the communication process always involves the element of stimulus and response, or the speaker and the listener presence always take turn in their roles. In social interaction, people are not directed to understand the words and deeds between the two sides, but more focused on the overall context in spoken communication.

In relation to this, Davis in Krech & Crutchfield (1982: 275-276) reveals that the essential idea of communication is when one can draw conclusions from the behaviour of others, namely in the form of ideas or thoughts and feelings. A successful communication is when the receiver can interpret the role of the communicators. In a communication, of course, not everyone will agree on the speaker. However, when each of the communicators understands each other, then the communication is deemed to perform well. The role of language is important here, in regulating the communication.

Another notions of language is about the rules and regulation of the language itself. Language is a set of signs, rules, structures and patterns that are formed in a strong unified. It consists of few elements such as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Phonology is regarding the sounds of language or letters and it is the smallest element that able to distinguish meanings. (Verhaar, 1991:36). Morphology deals with the set of words consisting of sounds (letters) and; syntax is about the sentence which consists of the set of words with reference to certain patterns, while the semantics is about the meaning, both denotative connotative, and collective.

Language is set up in spoken and written with varying scope, called a text. Language is a text that can be decomposed into smaller units. Gross (1988: 35) describes the results of scientific research on the structure of the language into the following segments:

Language Segments in the Context of Linguistics

Texts	<i>Text grammatical</i>
Paragraph	<i>Text grammatical</i>
Expression	<i>Syntax</i>
Phrase	<i>Syntax</i>
Word	<i>Morphology</i>
Syllable	<i>Morphology</i>
Phoneme	<i>Phonology</i>
Sound	<i>Phonology</i>

From the table, it can be seen that in the context of the language, the smallest segment is the sound and move to phonemes and then increased to syllables, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and text. The text is a collection of segments that form a whole coherent in the language.

In a linguistic context, sounds and phonemes are in the category of phonology. In language, phonology does not belong to the category of grammar, although it is able to distinguish the meaning. The syllables and words are in the group of morphology while phrases and sentences are in the syntactic level and at the same time the text and paragraphs falls under text grammatical.

From the above views, in the context of foreign language, it has fairly unique characteristics when compared to the Indonesian or Malay. As a mother tongue, Indonesian language is very different from the foreign language. Therefore, the difficulty to learn a foreign language lies in the differences and uniqueness of the language. Koda (1999) in *Modern Language*, 83 (1), 51-56 research suggests that as a second language, foreign language provides significant correlation to the learners with the first language (mother tongue) that are used. It means that the proficiency of the first language greatly affect the second language proficiency skills (foreign languages), such as English and other languages. These results indicate that the uniqueness and complexes characteristics of foreign language contribute to the difficulties of the learners in learning the language. However Alwasilah (2004) in his research revealed that

generally the Indonesian students in the United States of America are less able to speak English not because of its uniqueness, but rather due to the lack of critical thinking and the traditional culture, and not used to speak in the public. This problem should be studied on how to overcome difficulties in language learning.

3. The pattern of Language learning development

In the pattern of language learning development, the focused is on learning approaches used. Sukmadinata (2004: 194) mentions some of the learning programs approaches, (1) students centred learning program, (2) teachers centred learning program, and (3) problems centred learning program (problem solving). These three components involved students, teachers, teaching materials, media or means of learning facilities, environment, and so forth.

The basic concept that should be developed in learning language skills are related to increasing the level of language skills, emphasizing in learning process on students that are capable of acquiring minimum competency, either academic (cognitive and psychomotor), or in the form of affective that are understanding towards the cultural context of the language origin. The main concept that should be developed in learning language skills are related to the ability of understanding and mastering the different languages either spoken or written language in various types of discourse and topic (MONE: 2004).

The competency in the development of language learning is more likely to emphasize on academic competence, in the form of the ability to apply knowledge and language skills, including concepts and principles of language learning. Students, either individually or in groups performed the application of knowledge and skills. Therefore, the activity of learners in learning language skills became the focus.

In term of learning programs, the concept that should be developed should refer to the importance of learning language skills aspects. They are a) the language skills shown by teachers and based upon the role and behaviour of teacher specifically; b) the assessment criteria based on the ability of learners' language skills; c) assessment is based on language competence as an empirical evidence with the performance as indicators of learning achievement; d) the progress of learning that influenced by the performance of teachers is an indicator of the success of teachers, and e) learning programs should support the development of teachers' ability and should be developed in an integrated learning program.

The ability of teachers with regard to competency to be mastered consist of: 1) understand and able to produce regional variations of communication in different types of discourse, whether oral or written, 2) understand the science of language (linguistic) and their applications, 3) understand the relationship between the languages taught with the wearer's culture, and 4) understand the components of the language curriculum policies, such as approach, syllabus, techniques, and evaluation of learning.

In the process of language learning, the competence demanded focused on mastery of subject matter. This competency requires the existence of 1) understanding and comprehension of spoken and written standard communication (a skill) in accordance with the rules applicable in that language, 2) understanding and mastery of the language sciences (linguistics) the following applications; and 3) understanding the relationship of the taught language with the cultural community.

In the context of language learning, the four language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing is not in isolation, but integrated in the cohesion with each other. This context is closely related to the criteria, characteristics or competencies that all learners must have in any skill. Material or teaching resources should be tailored to the needs and significance for students at any particular level; such as what is in accordance with the conditions of students in the first, second, third and so on.

Aspects of the materials are in fact closely related to the curriculum, while the target is the emergence of the personal development of students are cumulative of a set of learning experiences that accompany the material or subject matter. Therefore, in the language learning process, the more specific objectives need to be formulated clearly thus, it will be easily and clearly implemented.

D. Conclusion

Development of language skills learning program is one of the efforts to develop learning programs that already exist with reference to language learning competence, namely to understand and master the variety of oral and written standard communication in various discourse and topics.

Competency-based learning in language skills is a model or learning program that rests on the development of competence through the facts that exist in the learner's learning experience, especially in improving the and language skills and ability.

The nature of the development of language skills learning program essentially refers to the questions related to: how to develop a language-learning program, and for what learning program was developed? This will be used as patterns or the development of learning programs to improve foreign language skills.

The development of language skills learning program is the ability to increase, deep and strengthening the learning program in order to increase the ability and skills so it will be significant for learners who are learning the language. Basic needs to the development of the learning program refers to the reality of the results achieved so far are not optimal and do not meet the competency standards are expected.

To develop a program of learning foreign language skills, the necessary steps should be taken into consideration such as preparing the instructional design that is the design of the learning program, implementation of learning program design, and evaluation of learning design.

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