ENGLISH FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES:

The Analysis of Syllabus Design and Material Development in EIS textbook

at Language Centre (LBB) of STAIN Kediri

Mohammad Muhyidin♣

Abstract

The article is intended to raise awareness on the importance of designing syllabus and developing materials of English for Islamic studies appropriately. This sort of English is a kind of English for specific purposes for non-English students. Syllabus design and material development contribute to help students improve their English skills. To enable both lecturers and students to achieve this objective, an appropriate syllabus and material development should be prepared well and designed comprehensively.

Keywords: Syllabus, EIS.

Introduction

English constitutes one of the compulsory subjects offered, not only at both junior and senior high schools, but also at the higher education institution, i.e. at university level in Indonesia. In the higher education institution curriculum, it falls under the subject group of what usually named *Mata KuliahDasarUmum* (General Basic Courses). Islamic higher education as part of the Indonesian higher education system, therefore, offers the English subject to be taken by all of the students from different faculties and departments. One of the main objectives in teaching English at the Islamic higher educations, especially at the undergraduate program, run either by the government or both private independent foundations

♣ Jurusan Tarbiyah Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) Kediri

and private foundations under certain religious organizations in Indonesia, such as the State Islamic University (UIN), the State Institute for Islamic Studies IAIN), and the State College for Islamic Studies (STAIN) as well the Islamic faculties in general universities, is primarily in order their students, mostly with multilingual background, are able to read the textbooks and articles on Islam written in English by students or non-students. The textbooks and articles to handle deal widely with different subjects in the field of Islamic studies, the English to be taught and then be included as part of English for special purposes or English for specific purposes (ESP). ESP is defined an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners.[1] This means that many teachers and lecturers design an appropriate courses and materials to meet the specific needs of the learners.

ESP, which was initially developed in 1960-s, is now generally classified into two broad categories: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational or Purposes (EOP) or English for Vocational Purposes (EVP).[2]If this broad division is to follow then the kind of English to be taught at Islamic higher education falls under the category English for Academic Purposes, to be more precisely it may even be termed *English for Islamic Studies*. First, it is goal directed, i.e. to handle various texts on Islamic studies; second, its course is based on a need analysis, which aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English; third, the students following the course are likely to be adults, they are undergraduate students; and

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[1]Hutchinson and Water, *English for Specific Purpose* (London : Cambridge University Press,1989) page 21
[2] Ibid, … page 17

Finally, its courses may be written about as though they consist of identical students, that is, that all the students in a class are involved in the same kind of work or specialist studies, i.e. all the students pursuing Islamic studies at undergraduate program.

Henceforth, the syllabus and material design of the English for Islamic studies should ideally follows the ESP syllabus and material design, and more especially EAP syllabus and material design. But how should this be done appropriately? This is the main question whose answer is worth searching and discussing in this paper.

Meaning of Curriculum and Syllabus

Although the notion of syllabus is of course not at all new in the context of education, but in fact the term of syllabus is sometimes confusing or even often interchanged carelessly with the term of curriculum. It seems that both terms are indeed among the terms or concepts that the most frequently discussed and misunderstood by some students, teachers, and lecturers, in language teaching and learning world. It is, therefore, to reduce the confusion and even to avoid this to happen, different definitions of these two terms need discussing.

Generally speaking, curriculum refers to all learning experiences that a person encounters at school, including those aspects which influence them only subconsciously.[3]The term of curriculum includes the goals, objectives, contents, process, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences

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[3]Littlewood, William, *Curriculum Design* (London: Macmillan, 1991) page 11

planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs. Similar elements of curriculum are also apparent when Richard, at al, describe the curriculum as an educational program which states: a) the educational purposes of the program (the Ends); b) the content, teaching procedures and earning experiences which will be necessary to achieve this purpose (the Means); and c) some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved.[4] Even Allen's explanation give a clearer understanding for us about what curriculum is when he suggests that the curriculum designer should consider the following six levels of curriculum design. They are: a) concept formation (general principles of language learning); b) administrative decision making (which includes the formulation of general aims); c) syllabus planning (the stage at which specific objectives are defined); d) material design (including texts, exercises and so on); e) classroom activity (where materials are adapted by individual teachers to their own situation; and f) evaluation (which tests the validity of the decision made at earlier stages).[5]

Based on the definitions and descriptions of both curriculum and syllabus, it is clear that curriculum is different from syllabus. While curriculum deals with broader aspect of teaching and learning, syllabus is limited to more or less a plan that should be kept as a guide by a teacher or lecturer when he is doing his job, teaching English. It is a blueprint and, at the same time, a flexible guide to follow

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[4]Yalden, Janice, *The Communicative Syllabus Evolution, Design and Implementation* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985) page 18

[5]Littlewood, William, Curriculum Design," in Roger Bowers and Christopher Brumfit, eds., *Applied Linguistics and English language Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1991) page 12

and to manipulate smartly. In syllabus, design concerns the selection of items to be learnt and the grading of those items into an appropriate sequence, curriculum design, however, is not just concerned with the list of what will be taught and in what order, but it also deals with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of education program.[6] In other words, syllabus is actually a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum. The syllabus should, therefore, be viewed in the context of ongoing curriculum development process.

Types of Syllabus Design

As an ongoing curriculum development process, syllabus usually has at least seven characteristics. They are: 1) It consists of comprehensive list of: content items and process items; about this, that a syllabus may contain all or any of the following: phonology, grammar, functions, notions, topics, themes, and tasks" 2). It is ordered; 3). Has an explicit objective; 4). It is a public document; 5). It may indicate a time schedule; 6). It may indicate a preferred methodology or approach; and 7). It mayrecommend materials.[7]

In addition to the characteristics of syllabus, literatures on both ELT and ESP also touch upon different types of syllabus employed in the English language teaching and learning practices. Among those types of syllabus which types are

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[6]Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Harlow: Longman, 3rd 3d, 2004) page 295

[7]Ur, Penny, *A Course in Language Teaching : Practice and Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) page 177

considered to be the most beneficial syllabus and which are not should be kept in mind. Before deciding which one or ones most suitable, therefore, a close look at the types of syllabus design offered should be undertaken. For instance, explains seven types of syllabus: grammar syllabus, lexical syllabus, functional syllabus, situational syllabus, topic-based syllabus, task-based syllabus, and multi syllabus.[8]No less than 10 main types of syllabus prevailing in both ELT and ESP. They are grammatical syllabus, lexical syllabus, grammatical-lexical syllabus, situational syllabus, topic-based syllabus, notional syllabus, functional-notional syllabus, mixed or multi-strand syllabus, procedural, and process syllabus. In *ESP Today*, Robinson provides the three broad types of syllabus as follows: content based syllabus, skill-based syllabus, and method-based syllabus.[9]

To get more clear-understanding of the difference among these types of syllabus, they should be described briefly as follows:[10]

Grammatical syllabus. Usually this type of syllabus lists a grammatical structure, such as the present tense, comparison of adjectives, relative clauses, usually divided into section graded according to difficulty and importance. This syllabus constitutes the commonest types of syllabus. Even in multi or combined syllabus design, for instance, it is the grammar which tends to be the main organizing foundation.

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[88]Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Harlow: Longman, 3rd 3d, 2004) page 296-299

[9]Ur, Penny, *A Course in Language Teaching : Practice and Theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) page 178-179

[10]Hutchinson and Water, *English for Specific Purpose* (London : Cambridge University Press,1989) page 80-90

Lexical syllabus. It generally offers a list of lexical items (girl, boy, go away,…) with associated collocations and idioms, usually divided into graded sections.[11]

Grammatical-lexical syllabus. It is a very common kind of syllabus; in sections that correspond to the units of a course, or in two separate lists.[12]Call this type of syllabus as a traditional syllabus.

Situational syllabus. It takes the real-life contexts of language users as their basis; sections would be headed by the names of situations or location such as 'Praying in the mosque'

Topic-based syllabus. This syllabus is rather like the situational syllabus, except the headings are broadly topic-based, including things like "University" or "The Islamic family"; these usually indicate a fairly clear set of vocabulary items, which may be specified.

Notional syllabus. Notions are concepts that language can express. General notion may include : 'number,' for instance, or 'time, 'place', color'; specific notion looks more like vocabulary items: 'man, 'woman', 'morning'. For introduction of the topics of the notional syllabus see: D. A. Wilkins.[13]

Functional-notional syllabus. Functions are things you can do with language, as distinct from notions you can express; for instances are 'identifying',

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[11]Willis, D, *The Lexical Syllabus* (London: Collins, 1990)

[12]Yalden, Janice, *The Communicative Syllabus Evolution, Design and Implementation* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985) page 19

[13]Wilkins, A, *Notional Syllabuses : A taxonomy and its relevance to foreign language curriculum development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)

'denying', and 'promising'. Purely functional syllabus is, however, rare; usually both functions and notions are combined.

Mixed or multi-strand syllabus or combined syllabuses. Increasingly, modern syllabuses are combining different aspects in order to be maximally comprehensive and helpful to lecturers and students; in this lecturer may find specification of topics, tasks, functions, notions, as well as grammar and vocabularies. Exclusively on grammar or lexical categories, for instance, the syllabus now shows any combination of items from grammar, lexis, language functions, situations, topics, tasks, different language skill tasks or pronunciation issues.

Procedural syllabus. Instead of program based, this syllabus specifies the learning task to be done rather than the language itself or even its meanings. Examples of tasks might be; map reading, doing scientific experiments; story-writing, and speech writing for *dakwah*. This type of syllabus is also termed the task-based syllabus, because it contain a list of a series of task and may later list some or all of the language to be used in the task. They are listening, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience, and creative task.[14]

Process syllabus. This is the only syllabus which is not pre-set. The content of the course is negotiated with the students at the beginning of the course and during it, and actually listed only retrospectively.

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[14]Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (Harlow: Longman, 3rd 3d, 2004) page 199

Islamic Studies and Its Sub-disciplines

Having touched upon the meaning and types of syllabus in ELT and ESP, it is worth discussing briefly about Islamic studies. In Indonesian context, Islamic studies are special religious disciplines and sub-disciplines offered at The State Islamic University, The State Institute for Islamic Studies, and The State College for Islamic Studies, and the faculty of Islamic studies at general or secular universities supervised under the Department of Religious Affairs. Islamic studies consist of some subfield-disciplines : English Language Teaching and Literature, Qur'an and Hadith; Islamic Thought, Islamic Law and Social Structure, Islamic History and Civilization, Arabic Language and Literature, Islamic education, Islamic preaching, and Modern Thought in Modern Muslim World.

Table 1: Islamic studies offered at STAIN Kediri[15]

No	FACULTY	DEPARTMENT
1	Faculty of Tarbiyah	TadrisBahasaInggris PAI Arabic Studies (PBA)
2	Faculty of Ushuluddin	Perbandingan Agama Al-Qur'an danIlmuTafsir Psikologi Islam StudiKomunikasi

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[15]http://www.stainkediri.ac.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=30, accessed 10 February 2014

		Program StudidanAkhlakTasawuf
3	Faculty of Shari'ah	EkonomiSyari'ah
		Ahwal – Alsyakhsiyah
		Al Qur'an danIlmuTafsir

Prevailing Curriculum and Syllabus Design

The curriculum discusses all subjects offered at the Islamic higher educations; the focus will be limited to English Main Topics of Curriculum. English in the curriculum falls under MKU*BahasaInggris I dan II* (English Application), i.e., English subject should be taken by all students of this higher education as apart from their respective departments and faculties with 3credits. The objective of teaching English subject in the curriculum is clearly stated that to provide enough knowledge on English to the students, especially in developing and improving their communicate competence in both spoken and written communication in both academic world and in higher education. This is included in the teaching and learning process.

Claiming to have referred and based, either directly or indirectly, to the same Curriculum as their start of departure, several English lecturers teaching English at different Islamic higher educations, whose works are accessible to the writer, have designed syllabus as they appear in the form of material development

intended for *English for Islamic Studies* textbooks published by STAIN Kediri Press.[16] It was also published the second book of EIS in 2011.[17]

Although these textbooks' content similarities, to a certain degree, however, they show differences, if not uniqueness, in their respective material design. The similarity that the textbooks share includes: First, their objectives or purposes as stated in prefaces of the textbooks, i.e., the book is provided for broadening their knowledge of English language components and developing their English skills to build their English communicative competence. This kind of objective really supports the students' need. The machinery for identifying the needs of any group of learners had been provided, all the courses designer had to do was to operate it. However, communicative syllabus design proved to be watershed in quite another way.[18]Second, in their order of unit presentation, reading passages are placed at the beginning, and then followed by vocabulary review and or other English language skills. Third, the reading passages presented in the textbooks are both on Islam and non-Islam issues. Forth, the reading passages presented in each unit or lesson presented in allthe textbooks, consists certain topics.

Regarding the differences of the textbooks which can be traced easily include: First, the textbooks are designed for Islamic studies, at least to be used by the students of the Islamic higher educations, they have different titles. The text books are compiled entitled their two textbooks with the same labels, *English for*

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[16] Abdullah Mokhammad, et.al, *English for Islamic Studies* (STAIN Press, 2010) Book 1
[17] Abdullah Mokhammad, et.al, *English for Islamic Studies* (STAIN Press, 2011) Book 2
[18]Hutchinson and Water, *English for Specific Purpose* (London : Cambridge University Press,1989) page 54

Islamic Studies. It is because they imply to have given an emphasis to the university students who are Muslim or just university students' not high school students, not the English itself with the emphasis to its specialty and to the students who has been studying in Islamic Studies. Second, although the main focus of the textbooks is on reading skill and language development skill, they differ in the choice of their reading material contents and topics. English for Islamic Studies' texts book present almost 80% reading passages on Islamic related topics but also offers general topics not special to Islam. It even presents reading passage non-Islamic related topics, as shown in their first and second textbook. Among 7 topics in book one are presented. It is only some topics related to Islam found in the book, i.e. "The Qur'an". Third, although all the two textbooks give similar emphasis on reading skill, they hardly provide rooms for four other language skills such asgrammar, writing, speaking and listening. The only EIS textbook also discuss about the task that should be done by the students. The differences occur in the textbook perhaps because the English Curriculum issued English Department of STAIN Kediri does not state explicitly what reading topics to be included. Positively thinking, the reason behind the exclusion of detailed reading topics in the Curriculum is, among other things, because the curriculum in TBI (TadrisBahasaInggris) probably wants to give more room or even freedom to the material designers at the Islamic higher education institutions to develop reading passages in line with their students' needs.

Alternative of Syllabus and Material Design

ESP course design is claimed as the product of a dynamic interaction between a numbers of elements: the results of the need analysis, the source designer's approach to syllabus and methodology, and existing materials.[19] Similarly, the alternative syllabus design, which is later on reflected and materialized in the form of material design and presently used as EIS textbook at STAIN Kediri, also evolved from such kind of the need analysis conducted directly or indirectly by the contributors of the textbook. The textbook, entitled *English for Islamic Studies* (**EIS**), has been tried, as far as possible, to follow 'something like' Multi-Strand Syllabusor Combined Syllabus design principles. For instance, all the basic four English skills such as listening, reading, speaking and writing as well as grammatical review and vocabulary building, which have been covered in the available EIS textbooks above, are integrated in single unit presentation. In addition, communicative approach, as a general teaching methodology to follow in Indonesia, is also taken into account, that is by presenting almost unedited and adapted authentic reading materials quoted from different sources on Islam written in English. This is line with one of ESP experts' opinion when he states that "a key concept within the communicative approach, and one felt to be particularly relevant for ESP, is that of authenticity.[20]

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[19]Robinson, Pauline C., *ESP Today : A Practitioner's Guide*, (N.York: Prentice Hall, 1991) page 34

[20] Ibid, 54

Other element which also influences both syllabus and material design for EIS is the 'existing materials'. The existing materials, especially those of reading passages, are designed not for teaching English purposes. The materials are texts on Islam and its related disciplines written by experts that should be carefully read and selected before their inclusion in the textbook.

English for Islamic studies text books are from different original and authentic sources in English. They are mostly selected, and some others are slightly adapted, from textbooks, journals, magazines, proceedings of seminars and conferences, and websites written by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and other experts in the field of study. The material authenticity is strictly kept to follow the latest principle of teaching foreign language.

Because of the nature of the readers contained in this textbook, therefore, it hopefully can be used not only in teaching and learning English language context, but it can also be used for any scientific writing. The material of Islamic studies, contained in this textbook, does not confine itself to the Islamic doctrines only, but it follows the formal classified subjects fall under Islamic studied as discussed above. They include the Qur'anic exegesis, Prophetic Tradition, Arabic, Islamic Law, Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Theology, Islamic Education, Islamic Economics, Islamic History and Civilization, and Modern Development in Islamic World. That is why the main title is then sub-titled with *English for Islamic Studies*.

English for Islamic Studies consists of two serial textbooks: book one and book two. These two books are supposed to be taught for the students of the first

and the second semester respectively. Book one consists of 14 units and each unit contains four major language skills; reading, vocabulary, structure, speaking, writing and language skill development. While reading, speaking, and writing are explicitly stated, listening is not. This is because listening is given as a part of oral reading and speaking activities and sometimes based on the lecturers' strategies. Each unit of the two textbook mostly consists of six sections: reading, vocabulary, structure, speaking, writing and language skill development. Section A, reading comprehension, encourage the students to answer the questions provided in reading text, provides the students an original English text on Islamic studies so as to make them more familiar with different styles and models of common written English. Section B, vocabulary building, encourages students to find appropriate meaning of the provided important vocabulary selected from the reading text. Vocabulary is important for the students to master that without grammar very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Vocabulary in research and practice is that individuals have various types of vocabulary that they used for different purpose.[21] Section C, Structure constitutes a series of theory and exercises focused on comprehension. This is to both train and assess the understanding of the students. English grammar and exercises in general way in order either to refresh or strengthen students' understanding of the English grammar previously studied at their earlier educations. Section D, speaking touches English as the aspects of productive language skills, speaking and writing. The optional topics for both discussion and writing are given. The students may

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[21]HiebertElfrieda H, Michael L. Kamil, *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary* (London: ebook, 2005) page 3

choose one of the topics relevant with the concerned presented reader. Other topics which are not mentioned but attract the students' interest can be considered to include. Finally, section E, further language skill development, provides additional information for the students who want to know further about English, games.

Table 2 and Table 3 below will clarify the description of syllabus and material design of the EIS textbook.

TABLE 2: EIS OF CONTENT

Objective: EIS book has been compiled to fulfill the need of the students studying English. It is specially designed for undergraduate students of non-English department. The book is broadening their knowledge of English components and developing their English language skill to build their English communicative components."

(Abdullah et.al., 2010:i)

TABLE 3: EXAMPLE OF UNIT DEVELOPMENT OF EIS

UNIT 1 :
  A. READING: THE QUR'AN
By MaulanaWahiduddin Khan
Glossary
      Comprehension Questions
Questions (Recognizing Restatement and Drawing Inferences)

  B. VOCABULARY
Synonym – Adjectives

  C. GRAMMAR
The Simple Present
Exercise 1
Move these sentences to negative, interrogative, and negative- interrogative.
Exercise 2:
Please translate into English the words in bracket.
Exercise 3:

Please answer these questions!

D. SPEAKING
Introduction
There are several ways of introducing people. If you want to introduce a friend to someone, you could say:

E. WRITING
Please write down Muslims daily's activity in Romadhon month.

F. LANGUAGE SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Instruction: Do this puzzle!
See Appendix I

	Reading	Element of Syari'ah Law
	Vocabulary	Prefix
	Structure	The first and second conditional
	Speaking	Chain story
	Writing	Got a price
Unit 7	Language Development Skill	Prefixes in crossword
	Reading	Interpersonal communication
	Vocabulary	Context clue
	Structure	Gerunds
	Speaking	Talking about country
	Writing	A short composition about a country
Unit 8	Language Development Skill	What will you do if you are
	Reading	Career in psychology
	Vocabulary	Multiple meaning word
	Structure	Passive sentence
	Speaking	Expressing daily routines
	Writing	Writing daily routines
	Language Development Skill	Same / differences

Concluding

The success or the failure of any teaching English as a foreign language in the context of English for academic purposes, more specifically English for Islamic studies, is influenced by many factors. One of the important factors is the availability of the appropriate syllabus and material designs. Since there are not only many types of syllabus commonly applied in the world of ESP teaching and learning context, but Islamic studies themselves also cover very wide sub-disciplines, therefore, to find and select which design(s) is(are) the most appropriate for EIS is not at all an easy task. What have been done so far, indeed, constitute partial efforts to meet such an urgent need. Although, the present writer has also tried to prepare alternative syllabus design for EIS, as presented above, it is of course still far from being perfect.

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