EFL TEACHING IN HIGH SCHOOL, NEEDS ANALYSIS: A CASE IN UZBEKISTAN

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Introduction

Needs analysis is the primary step of any systematic process. A vast number of scientists pointed out its role in developing materials in teaching and learning contexts. According to Brown (2006), needs analysis is an essential tool that describes learners' needs to facilitate the curriculum of educational places and has an enormous effect on making the teaching and learning processes more specific. As future EFL/ESL teachers, we have to gain not only teaching skills but also the subtleties of designing courses because language proficiency can be taught only after having a deep comprehension of the learners' target goals and shortcomings.

In order to conduct a Needs Analysis, several EFL classes have been observed during a week, and one student was chosen as a participant. First of all, we decided to find out the subject's needs, weaknesses, and strong points to design a relevant lesson plan further. Berwick (1989) pointed out that there can be some distinctions between the needs, which learners felt, and the needs that teachers and other stakeholders consider. To consider all complexities and meet expectations from the course, we provided a meticulous needs analysis that comprises three stages.

Learner Profile

The subject of our needs analysis is a seventeen-year-old girl who is a high school student. D.I (her name is deliberately hidden) is bilingual. Although she was born in a traditional Uzbek family, she acquired the Russian language at an advanced level due to the significant exposure to this language during her childhood. She started learning English in elementary school; however, owing to the scarcity of practicing the English language, the subject could not master it. Her primary goal in learning English is to enter the University. By nature, D.I is introverted, which negatively affects the learning process and lowers the intention of speaking in public. The subject prefers group work activities, where she could state her ideas easily with other group members' assistance. Although she has never been abroad, she is very interested in learning English speaking countries' culture. D.I is a very intelligent student with great

enthusiasm to learn foreign languages. However, she usually faces several difficulties that make her unable to keep up with English classes.

Methodology

Data collection tools

Working on the N.A. of the selected participant, we, with our group members, considered that making only one tool is inadequate for collecting complete data. Thus, we decided to use "a triangle approach" of Richards (2001, p.59). As Richards (2001) states, "Since one source of information is likely to be incomplete or partial, using three or more sources is advisable, and many different sources of information should be sought." This is the main reason we administer observation, interview, and questionnaire to analyze the learner's needs. Moreover, these data analysis tools are perceived as the most effective and standard tools, among other research pieces. Analyzing learners' needs provides researchers with the most possible data about students, and it is the best source for making a successful curriculum for the course.

Description of the Needs Analysis activities

Stage 1

Firstly, we have conducted an observation for two days to answer such questions: Is it attractive for our participant to learn foreign languages? Is it not difficult for her to communicate with others? What kind of learner is she? After gaining answers, we moved to the interview.

Stage 2

While interviewing D.I., we asked questions concerning her main goals in learning English. We asked what her motivation is, what kind of learning styles and strategies she uses, and personal traits related to second language acquisition. The exciting interview, which consisted of 15 questions, was recorded and scripted with the participant's permission.

Stage 3

In the final step, we used a questionnaire as a tool because we wanted to find out more information about our subject's interests and needs, to identify her weaknesses and robust points, in order to understand what improvements we should implement in the course and to design a relevant lesson plan.

Findings

Learning goals

The most crucial goal of D.I in learning English is to enter the university and improve communicative abilities because, after the interview, it was defined that learner has some problems with fluency and accent. The subject is eager to spend hours inside and outside of the class to learn and practice the language. It was revealed that D.I prefers speaking activities and approaches based on them; thus, the comprehension-based approach can be suggested to

use in the future, rather than grammar-translation, as used before. Of course, the participant's aim is not only to be a good speaker developing moral imagination and a sense of vocation but also to become a better listener and more creative and critical thinker.

Tomlinson (1986) noted that "learners are most motivated, most open to language input, when their emotions, feelings, and attitudes are most engaged" (p.34). Our participant considers herself an introverted person, but our findings show that she is more ambivert than an introvert. D.I prefers to work in a group and compete with others if it makes and challenges her to think to improve her critical thinking. Furthermore, it was identified that our subject would like to enhance more her academic skills, which should be very useful for her, as she is going to continue her study either at university in her native country or abroad.

In general, although the directed aim of our participant is to enter the university and speak fluently, she should improve her language proficiency in all English skills also in an international context.

Learning styles and strategies

Auditory learning enables auditory learners to learn best by hearing or through verbal communication (Filiz & Fethi Kayalar, 2017). Based on this fact, it is clear that the needs analysis subject considers herself to be an auditory learner as she prefers listening activities more and using all that she has learned in her speaking. She is good at remembering what she hears as she learns information through auditory representation. She also likes learning English through instructed language learning and through a communicative classroom environment where she feels free speaking with other members in a group. That is to say; there is more advantage in listening to podcasts, radio broadcasts, and other listening activities in English. As she endeavors to reach a fluent speaker level, group discussions, debates, making presentations, and giving speeches, for sure, meet her needs of learning the English language. Several studies have confirmed proper strategies in language learning aid students in becoming more effective learners inside the classroom and foster a more efficient development of students' mastery of the target language (Wong and Nunan, 2011). The subject of the needs analysis tends to encourage conversation, which stimulates social interaction, giving her an opportunity to practice language, boost comprehension to sharpen oral language skills, and some other strategies inspired by the learner's needs.

Personality traits

When it comes to the learner's personality traits, she is quite shy to speak individually, and her introverted personality blocks her from being flexible to different situations. However, she is competitive enough to challenge her knowledge with others in a friendly manner as it inspires her to study better and strive further.

Addressing learner needs

With regard to formulating the course aims and objectives for a language program, Richards (2001) suggests that aims and objectives statements should be derived from information gathered during a needs analysis. In addition, Brown (1995) is of the opinion as well that the process of needs analysis can generate a tremendous amount of information that must be sorted and utilized in some way within the curriculum. Having analyzed the data of the subject of NA through the interview, questionnaire, and observation, it is found that the learner needs communicative competence–based syllabus design. In this regard, the lesson plan is to be built considering her personality, as she needs to be engaged in individual presentations, public speaking, and other ways of producing her knowledge independently. Textbooks and materials need to be chosen in an academic context as her fundamental aim is studying in tertiary education. As a matter of the fact that the subject of NA learns better through listening, speaking, and interacting with others, a teacher should treat her as social butterflies using the following strategies: during the explanation of the new topic, a student should be asked to repeat ideas in their own words, allow her to listen to approved music during silent study periods, the teacher should modulate her vocal tone, inflection, and body language during lectures and create a lesson plan that includes a social element, such as paired readings, group work, experiments, projects, and performances. "In the Information Age, education – particularly higher education – is key to a healthy income. Almost no amount of hard work will make up for the lack of it" (Haycock, 2006, p.9). Accordingly, the syllabus should include strategies that help her and other students, who strive to study in higher education settings, improve test scores, and prepare more effectively for exams.

Conclusion

A small-scale research done for needs analysis concludes that the processes of designing a lesson plan and a syllabus should be done taking students' learning styles, traits, strategies, goals, and personality into consideration as it was analyzed in the example of the subject of NA, D.I. It also becomes clear that only one source of data analysis is not adequate for achieving a specific result as a diversity of the analysis tools can only clarify the very needs of the learners. Based on the reports of the analysis tools, it is clearly illustrated that the objectives of the course and the learners' goals, along with their weaknesses and strengths, are to be put accordingly when it comes to deciding on selecting an appropriate syllabus.

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