



Book Review: English Curriculum And Material Development

Andi Farid Baharuddin

Universitas Sawerigading Makassar

E-mail: andifaridbaharuddin@gmail.com

Article History

Submitted:

14 Mei 2023

Accepted:

31 Mei 2023

Published:

Juni 2023

DOI:

10.47530/edulead.v4i1.152

Copyright: @2023, Author.

Book Title:

English Curriculum and
Material Development

Author:

Pryla Rochmawati

Publisher:

STAIN PO PRESS, Third
Edition (2017)

Pages: 96

Abstract: *One of the most significant things that EFL students at the university level should understand is the English education curriculum program. Curriculum and syllabus are discussed in the program as the procedures of preparing, constructing, and delivering the teaching material to whom the teaching material is presented. This book goes into detail about language curriculum and creating appropriate materials for language teaching. However, in this article, I did not only examine the book's basic theme, but I also assessed its weaknesses, strengths, and challenges. In this section, I first demonstrated the principle ideas in Rochmawati's book. Second, I criticized various themes that were left out of the book.*

Abstrak: Salah satu hal terpenting yang harus dipahami oleh siswa EFL di tingkat universitas adalah program kurikulum pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Kurikulum dan silabus dibahas dalam program sebagai tata cara, menyiapkan (topik), menyusun, dan menyajikan bahan ajar kepada siapa bahan ajar itu disajikan. Buku ini menjelaskan secara rinci tentang kurikulum bahasa dan membuat bahan yang tepat untuk pengajaran bahasa. Namun, dalam artikel ini, saya tidak hanya mengupas tema dasar buku tersebut, tetapi juga menilai kelemahan, kekuatan, dan tantangannya. Di bagian ini, saya pertama kali mendemonstrasikan ide-ide prinsip dalam buku Rochmawati. Kedua, saya mengkritik berbagai tema yang tidak dicantumkan dalam buku ini.

Scan this QR Read Online



License:

This work is licensed under
a Creative Commons
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0
International License.



INTRODUCTION

English education curriculum program at the university level is one of the most important things that EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students should comprehend. The program has some discourses that discuss curriculum and syllabus as the process of preparing (topic), constructing, and delivering the teaching material to whom the teaching material is delivered.

Curriculum plays the main role in running the education system in most countries around the world (Rochmawati, 2017). An appropriate curriculum reflects a good educational stakeholders' community (e.g., educational policymakers/government, educators/teachers and lecturers, learning content, and the learning circumstance or society) who desire to design a great education system that is appropriate for the learners' competence.

For instance, in order to design educational curriculum in the English Language Teaching (ELT) model, every educator should examine the teaching material whether it is suitable for their learners' level or not. Evaluating the teaching material assists educators discover the proper material that is in line with students' learning levels. Therefore, Rochmawati perceives that for the purpose of designing the appropriate teaching content, the English educators must investigate what the students' lacks, necessities, and goals are in acquiring the English content. This is what education practitioners and theorists called "need analysis" (NA) in the ELT model.

NA can be particularly valuable for evaluating the teaching and learning content for the following program. This evaluation can be shared with the educational policymakers, in order to release public policy

related to education program curriculum that can be constitutional guidance generated on a national scale. Rochmawati discusses this as one of the teaching curriculum design strategies.

In her book, she separates several points regarding: 1) the definition of curriculum and its difference from a syllabus; 2) an approach to constructing curriculum; 3) the aims and goals of the curriculum; 4) the assessment and testing component of curriculum; 5) material as part of curriculum; 6) the concept of teaching; 7) the evaluation concept; 8) describing curriculum in Indonesia; 9) explaining the curriculum at SMA/MA level; 10) explaining the curriculum at SMP/MTS level; and 11) the ELT curriculum development.

However, in writing a critical review of Rochmawati's book, I am not only describing and summarizing the main idea of the book, but I am also expressing my assessment of the weaknesses, strengths, and problems of the book that I have reviewed. In this point below, I first show the curriculum conception written in Rochmawati's book. Secondly, I criticize some topics missed in the book.

The Main Idea of Rochmawati's Book

A number of educators have attempted to define the term "curriculum." Curriculum is a method of performing preservice for teachers in preparing their lesson plans (De Lima & Dos Passos, 2015). This means that when developing the curriculum, teachers are expected to have prior experience or study in order to establish learning activities in the classroom. Teachers with this background may be able to present content that is distinctive and fascinating to their students.

Furthermore, nowadays, teachers are helped and supported by technological devices in delivering their material. Related to this case, technological devices and digitalization should be integrated into the English curriculum (Yuyun, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students are accustomed to conducting teaching and learning activities using technological devices.

Although the pandemic has dramatically decreased and we are beginning to employ face-to-face learning models in the post-COVID-19 era, the teaching method is still expected to operate a digital device. This means curriculum is currently not only talking about the preparation of teaching content but also discussing the teaching tools used to deliver the material.

From the two perspectives above, it can be simplified that curriculum as a product is designed to develop students' critical thinking by preparing good material (process) and delivering it using specific tools appropriate for the learners' level (the tools can be technological devices) (Rochmawati, 2017).

According to Rochmawati, there are numerous processes that educators should take in order to create the ELT curriculum, including assessing the needs, creating the purpose of the study, and choosing what to evaluate. In contrast to the curriculum discourse above, the definition of syllabus seeks to perceive the output of the material. Rochmawati states that the word "syllabus" refers to the outcome of a course of study. The syllabus concept triggers both teachers and students to target what is going to be gained by learners.

Furthermore, the NA approach is integrally linked to curriculum discourse when it comes to developing a curriculum that is appropriate for the level of students and

their competency. As previously stated, the NA approach is a method for investigating students' lacks, necessities, and goals. Educators should use the following approaches to collect all of the information regarding the three needs mentioned above:

- a) Clarifies the Purpose of the NA. This refers to ways in which teachers' curiosity leads them to inquire about some goals, such as what students want to know, how to measure students' competence, and what the teachers are trying to measure
- b) Identifying the Population. In this case, educators should analyse the circumstances that could potentially affect students' learning. It could be friends, families, learning facilities, etc.
- c) Design a Survey Instrument. The survey itself consists of several questions that, expectedly, can help teachers evaluate the material. For instance, are the learning tools easy to use for students?
- d) Analysing Data. This point refers to the scientific approach, which urges educators to study the data gathered after completing the preceding procedures.

After discussing the points above, educators then talk about the important objectives and goals of the curriculum itself. Every subject has goals to be achieved. A goal could be simply defined as the purpose of doing something. Goals guide teachers to map or organize the teaching target. For instance, by having the goals of curriculum design, teachers can map the primary, secondary, and tertiary content given to the students.

The Curriculum objectives can be implemented as tasks that educators must take (Nation & Mecalister, 2010). However, the goals themselves should be assessed or tested gradually in order to determine whether the curricular aim is still relevant or irrelevant at the time. Rochmawati demonstrates different types of tests in creating tests as a means to

evaluate learners' competency, including 1) the norm-reference test (NRT), 2) the criteria-reference test (CRT), and 3) a mix of NRT and CRT.

The first type of test refers to a testing method to evaluate global language abilities such as academic listening ability, speaking performance, writing, and reading comprehension. The purpose of applying this test is to determine students' linguistic intelligence and understand their language skill levels. Furthermore, for the second type of test, refer to the testing method to know if students can follow the subject and if they can accomplish all the tests. The last type of test is the combination of NRT and CRT.

Furthermore, content and material design should take note of students' levels of learning. If it is not appropriate for the level of the learners, it may cause misunderstandings when they learn the material. For example, if the teacher provides educational content to the young English learners with excessive grammatical language usage, it can definitely hamper their understanding of the subject. In contrast, if the teaching material is intended for intermediate or advanced students but is delivered with basic and simple information, the advanced students will become bored throughout the class activity. This is referred to as technique in the delivery of teaching content.

Besides, providing exercises for developing students' skills is definitely crucial in material design. Exercises are used to know how well students follow the subject given by teachers. Without giving students exercise, it is difficult for teachers to measure their students' levels. Besides, it is also difficult to evaluate whether the teaching content is effective or not. There are several points to which every teacher should pay close attention when they desire to give an exercise as a way to measure their learners'

knowledge, i.e., practical knowledge, content knowledge, and contextual knowledge.

The book *English Curriculum & Material Development*, written by Rochmawati not only discusses the theoretical design of the global ELT model, but also attempts to apply it to the curriculum development in Indonesia, beginning with the early national freedom of Indonesia (the curriculum was called *Rentjana Pemebelajaran* at the time) and ending with the Curriculum 2013 (revised edition).

The main goal of the English curriculum and material development in Indonesia is to build some English competencies, particularly communicative ability. This competence teaches students two critical things: linguistic intelligence (phone or sound, morphology or vocabulary, syntax or grammar, semantic or meaning of words, and pragmatics, meaning the social context), and cultural understanding of the English language as well as its functional linguistics.

For example, in order to fully comprehend the meaning of a newspaper's discourse, students are expected to comprehend the meaning contained in the newspaper's reading passage. Moreover, in order to critically grasp the content of the newspaper itself, students use functional linguistics to analyze the content contained in the newspaper.

Furthermore, the English curriculum in Indonesia (especially at the senior high school level) integrates the national character-building knowledge through some English texts and books, and it is expected to improve students' social and cultural knowledge (Baharuddin et al., 2022). These teaching aspects are seen as the material design that not only talks about linguistic intelligence (although this is an important aspect of having English skills for students and understanding the reading passage in the text) but also norms

and ethical values that can influence students' mentality.

As a result, under Indonesia's 2013 curriculum, students are encouraged to construct forum group discussion (FGD) as a learning model in order to make them active in communicating and expressing their opinions to both their teachers and colleagues. Another reason for incorporating the FGD model into the English learning environment is to train students' speaking performance so that teachers can assess their students' abilities.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Book

At this point, I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Rochmawati's book. This book contains many outstanding things related to the English curriculum and material design that include teaching technique, approaches to develop material, and the objective of language learning as the English language teaching book guidance. These components are defined as the book's strengths, which educators can use to teach English at either the senior high school or junior high school levels.

Of course, the writer of the book educates teachers on how to present the teaching content using various approaches, such as motivation, using teaching instruments that match the learners' level, and offering students a test to evaluate and know their learning growth. Besides, the teaching strategy describes how teachers push their pupils to learn new skills.

Therefore, a motivational approach should also be incorporated into the teaching technique because it can encourage students to accomplish their learning goals. For instance, educators can motivate students by telling them that if they have sufficient English language proficiency, they are able to access job openings and continue their studies at the

university level. This is a motivational approach that can be inserted into both the teaching technique and the teaching content or material of the English language curriculum.

Furthermore, the second strength explains that in order to design materials, teachers should use the NA approach so that they may examine the learners' needs, necessity, and objective of language acquisition. Finally, the book's final strength is its emphasis on language learning. The primary goal of language learning is to gain both receptive and productive language skills. Although having these skills as an aim is sufficient, the discourse target in this book does not only cover gaining language skills for senior high school students in Indonesia, but also how they use such skills in a social or real environment.

On the other hand, this book also has some weaknesses, as my critiques for the writer of this book. There are some weaknesses that can be found after reading this book; some of those are inconsistencies in the writing. This book, entitled English Curriculum Material Design, should basically be written in English. Nevertheless, the use of the English language as a communication tool in academic writing is not fully documented.

This book consists of 11 chapters, yet not all chapters are written in English. In Chapter 9, the discourse uses Bahasa Indonesia to elaborate on the topic. Therefore, I see this as a weakness of the book. Furthermore, another weakness that can be seen in this book is in Chapter 10. This chapter explains the curriculum at the SMP/MTS level. However, the writer does not make any statements or components of discourse that can support her argument.

The last critique that I would like to share is, the writer does not enhance the technological or digital device variable as a teaching or learning tool used in the class

activity. In fact, this book was published in 2017, when technology was rapidly developing. As we know, English language teaching and learning are currently inseparable from technology. By using technological devices, teachers are able to deliver their material easily.

CONCLUSION

As an analyst, I must acknowledge that Rochmawati has provided readers with a wealth of useful information about the English curriculum and how to create teaching materials. This book would be beneficial for middle school teachers to improve their teaching approach and motivate their students to learn language skills. Also, this book does not only discuss theoretical construction in the ELT model, but it also provides some practical ways that any secondary school educator can use. However, as noted in the previous point, this book has certain flaws. Readers can use the book's benefits while avoiding its weaknesses.

REFERENCES

- Argawati, N. O., & Suryani, L. (2020). Digital-based instruction: Chances and challenges in english language teaching context. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9(4), 1138–1144. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i4.20579>
- Baharuddin, A. F., Nur, S., & Isma, A. (2022). TEACHING STRATEGY IN ENRICHING THE EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY THROUGH LITERATURE. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Learning*, 25(1), 250–262. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v25i1.4105>
- De Lima, T. F. M., & Dos Passos, T. N. (2015). Evaluating a learning

management system to support classroom teaching. In *Curriculum Design and Classroom Management: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (Vol. 1). <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-8246-7.ch019>

- Nation, I., & Mecalister, J. (2010). *Language Curriculum Design* (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Rochmawati, P. (2017). *English Curriculum and Material Development* (AHMADI (ed.); 3rd ed.). STAIN Po PRESS. [http://repository.iainponorogo.ac.id/602/1/Diktat FULL.pdf](http://repository.iainponorogo.ac.id/602/1/Diktat%20FULL.pdf)
- Yuyun, I. (2018). JER| Journal of ELT Research. *Journal of ELT Research*, 3(1), 78–86. <https://doi.org/10.22236/JER>