Facilitating the Development of a Topical and Functional Syllabus for Junior High School English Club

Memfasilitasi Pengembangan Silabus Topikal dan Fungsional untuk Klub Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Menengah Pertama

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Abstrak

Pada akhir tahun 2021, sebuah Klub Bahasa Inggris Ekstrakurikuler didirikan di SMP Garuda, Kota Tangerang, setelah diadakan bimbingan dan lokakarya oleh Tim Pengabdian Masyarakat dari Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Syekh-Yusuf. Setelah berjalan selama satu tahun, pihak sekolah mengidentifikasi beberapa aspek yang perlu diperbaiki dan dievaluasi terkait pelaksanaan kegiatan klub, khususnya mengenai pelatih ekstrakurikuler dan materi yang disampaikan kepada siswa. Hal ini mendorong sekolah untuk merencanakan pengembangan kurikulum atau panduan yang lebih terstruktur untuk kegiatan Klub Bahasa Inggris di SMP Garuda. Untuk meningkatkan kualitas kegiatan ekstrakurikuler Klub Bahasa Inggris, diadakan program pengabdian masyarakat guna membantu pengembangan kurikulum klub di SMP Garuda Kota Tangerang. Meskipun kegiatan Klub Bahasa Inggris bersifat ekstrakurikuler, penting untuk memiliki rangkaian kegiatan yang jelas, seperti silabus dan materi yang relevan, guna membantu siswa mencapai tujuan peningkatan keterampilan berbahasa Inggris. Melalui program ini, fasilitator memberikan arahan dalam mengembangkan kurikulum berbasis silabus dengan fokus pada konten topikal dan fungsional. Hal ini dilakukan melalui Analisis Kebutuhan dan Diskusi Kelompok Terarah (FGD) bersama pelatih ekstrakurikuler Klub Bahasa Inggris di SMP Garuda Kota Tangerang. Sebagai bagian dari evaluasi program, dilakukan pretest dan posttest untuk menilai peningkatan keterampilan bahasa Inggris siswa sebelum dan setelah penerapan kurikulum baru.

Keyword: Klub Bahasa Inggris, Kurikulum Klub Bahasa Inggris, Silabus Topikal dan Fungsioanl

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Abstract

At the end of 2021, an extracurricular English Club was established at SMP Garuda in Kota Tangerang, following guidance and workshops conducted by the Community Service Team from the English Education Program at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University. After operating for one year, the school identified several areas needing improvement and evaluation related to the club's activities, particularly in regard to the extracurricular instructors and the materials provided to students. This encouraged the school to plan a more structured curriculum or guide for the English Club activities at SMP Garuda. To improve the quality of the extracurricular English Club, a community service program was conducted to assist in the club's curriculum development at SMP Garuda in Kota Tangerang. Although the English Club is an extracurricular activity, it is essential to have a clear set of activities, including a syllabus and relevant materials, to help students achieve the goal of improving their English skills. Through this program, facilitators provided direction in developing a syllabus-based curriculum focusing on topical and functional content. This was carried out through Needs Analysis and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with extracurricular English Club instructors at SMP Garuda in Kota Tangerang. As part of the program evaluation, pretests and posttests were conducted to assess students' English skill improvement before and after the implementation of the new curriculum.

Keyword: English Club, English Club Curriculum, Topical and Functional Syllabus

1. Introduction

The introduction of English at an early age plays a significant role in helping Indonesian students improve their English language skills at the school level. Ideally, English should be introduced as early as

elementary education to lay a strong foundation for language learning. However, with the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, English was removed as a compulsory subject in elementary schools. This policy has impacted the English proficiency of junior high school (SMP) students, including those at SMP Garuda, Kota Tangerang.

At the onset of this policy, many first-grade students at the junior high school level were found to have insufficient English knowledge to keep up with the demands of the curriculum. English teachers faced the dual challenge of adhering to curriculum standards while making the learning process engaging enough for students to grasp the subject matter. For instance, the English teacher at SMP Garuda highlighted that many grade VII and VIII students lacked basic English vocabulary knowledge, even for simple topics such as 'Kinds of Occupation' or 'Things in the Classroom.' Some students were unfamiliar with these basic terms, demonstrating a significant gap in foundational knowledge.

Moreover, based on the results of a needs analysis conducted with SMP Garuda students, it was revealed that their interest in learning English during class was very low. Their proficiency in key English skills—speaking, reading, writing, and listening—remained relatively weak. Supporting this observation, data from the 2017 National Examination indicated that the average English score among students was only 37.34, which was lower than their scores in the other three core subjects.

As a result, students expressed a need for additional opportunities to learn English outside of regular class hours, recognizing that the classroom environment alone was not sufficient to support their understanding of the language. Time constraints and the limited focus on English during class meant that students struggled to grasp the material effectively. This hindered the overall effectiveness of English language instruction at the school.

In response to these issues, lecturers from the English Language Education program at Universitas Islam Syekh-Yusuf (UNIS) initiated a community service program to establish an extracurricular "English Club" at SMP Garuda, Kota Tangerang. The aim was to improve students' English proficiency by providing them with learning opportunities beyond the classroom. English Club activities have been shown to enhance students' English skills outside regular school hours [1], [3], [6] (Amelia et al., 2017; and similar programs have demonstrated positive outcomes for students in other educational settings, such as Madrasah Aliyah [14]. These activities also provide valuable insights and experiences for both students and teachers involved.

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In 2021, the English Club at SMP Garuda was officially established, following mentoring and workshops led by lecturers from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at UNIS. After running for a year, the school began evaluating the program's implementation. Several concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of the extracurricular coaches and the material delivered to students. Recognizing the need for improvement, the school sought to develop a structured curriculum or guidebook for the English Club to ensure that its objectives were being met.

To address these challenges and improve the quality of the English Club's extracurricular activities, a community service program was proposed. The objective of the program was to assist in the development of a clear, syllabus-based curriculum for the English Club at SMP Garuda Kota Tangerang. While English Club activities are extracurricular, they still require well-organized instructional tools—such as syllabi and materials—to effectively help students achieve their language-learning goals.

Through this program, facilitators provided guidance in developing a functional and topical syllabus-based curriculum for the English Club. This process involved conducting a Needs Analysis and holding Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the extracurricular coaches at SMP Garuda Kota Tangerang to ensure that the curriculum aligned with the students' needs and the school's objectives.

2. Materials and Method

Research Design: This curriculum development program uses a pre-experimental method with a pretest-posttest design to measure the improvement in students' English skills following the implementation of the new curriculum. Assessment is conducted through pretest and posttest instruments designed to evaluate English skills comprehensively, particularly in speaking and understanding language topics.

Data Collection Instruments: The pretest and posttest consist of written tests and speaking activities designed to assess vocabulary mastery, sentence structure, and fluency in everyday communication situations. These instruments include tasks aligned with the developed syllabus content, such as describing oneself, discussing daily activities, and responding to questions.

The community service activity was carried out at the Daarul Hikmah Al-Madani Islamic Education Foundation (YPI), located in Kelurahan Karang Sari, Kecamatan Neglasari, Kota Tangerang, Banten. The target participants were the seventh and eighth-grade students of SMP Garuda.

In addressing the identified problems, lecturers and students from the English Education program at FKIP UNIS collaborated with the principal and English teachers at SMP Garuda, under the Darul Hikmah Al-Madani Foundation, to assist in the development of an extracurricular English Club curriculum. The community service program was conducted over four weeks, from July to August 2023.

To structure the implementation of the community service program, three stages were followed: the planning stage, the implementation stage, and the evaluation stage. These stages ensured that the program was systematic and focused, utilizing a blend of theoretical approaches and practical applications.

Phase 1: Planning
- **Needs Analysis:** Questionnaires were distributed to both students and English teachers to identify the materials and activities that would be most beneficial for the English Club. The goal was to ensure that the curriculum met the needs of the participants and aligned with the school's objectives.
- **Scheduling:** A detailed schedule for the mentoring sessions over the next four weeks was determined. This ensured all parties involved were aware of their roles and the timeline for curriculum development.
- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** An FGD was held to outline activity plans, which included preparing the necessary resources and determining the structure for the English Club's extracurricular curriculum. This collaborative approach allowed teachers and facilitators to share input and set clear goals.

Phase 2: Implementation

Pretest: The pretest was conducted before the implementation of the new curriculum. Students were asked to complete a written test and participate in a speaking session lasting 15–20 minutes per student. The pretest results reflect students' initial abilities in using English in simple communication situations.

Curriculum Development Assistance: For four weeks, lecturers, student facilitators, and extracurricular coaches worked together to develop the curriculum tools for the English Club. This involved creating detailed lesson plans and resources.

Syllabus Design: The syllabus developed for the English Club was based on Topical and Situational approaches. These types of syllabi were chosen because they are well-suited to the practical nature of extracurricular activities and cater to real-life language usage scenarios, which are essential for improving students' communicative skills in English.

Curriculum Implementation: The developed curriculum was implemented over three months during weekly English club meetings. The materials provided focused on topical content (e.g., daily activities and personal experiences) and functional content (e.g., giving directions and asking questions).

Post-test: After three months of implementation, students took a post-test like the pretest. Post-test data were used to identify improvements in students' English skills following the implementation of the new curriculum.

Phase 3: Evaluation
The final phase involved a thorough evaluation of the program to assess its effectiveness. This review focused on the core activities of the mentoring and curriculum development process. The facilitators and community service partners evaluated whether the objectives had been met and if the curriculum was adequately developed to enhance the students' English proficiency. Feedback from this evaluation was used to determine if further interventions or modifications were needed.
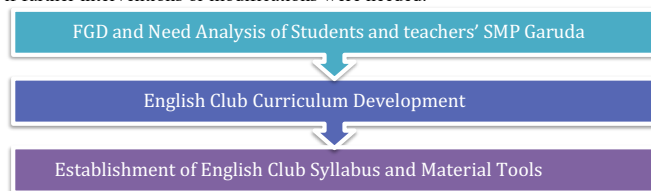
FGD and Need Analysis of Students and teachers' SMP Garuda

English Club Curriculum Development

Establishment of English Club Syllabus and Material Tools

Figure 1. The Stages in Conducting Community Service Program

As it was illustrated in Figure 1, for the implementation of this community services to be more focused, teams used a combination of theory and application methods. In general, this activity is carried out through three stages (1) plan stage, (2) implementation stage, and (3) evaluation stage. The job description and role of the proposing team are described as follows:

Phase 1: Plan
1) Distributing questionnaires for the need analysis of English students and teachers related to materials and activities suitable for extracurricular English Club.
2) Determine the detailed time or schedule of mentoring for the next 4 weeks.
3) Conducted FGD to determine several activity plans such as what must be prepared in terms of designing the English club extracurricular curriculum.

Phase 2: Implementation
1) Carry out assistance for 4 weeks in the preparations of English club curriculum tools with extracurricular coaches, lecturer facilitator teams and students.
2) The syllabus that will be prepared is based on Topical and Situational because this is the most suitable type of syllabus designed for English Club activities at SMP Garuda, Kota Tangerang.

Phase 3: Evaluation
The evaluation phase is carried out to review the community services activities, especially in the core activities, namely activities in the mentoring and development process carried out by a team of facilitators and community services activity partners. This review is necessary to see if the activity provided is adequate or if further action is needed.

3. Results and Discussion

Pre-implementation
Analysis

Pretest Results: In the pretest, it was found that most students had basic English skills, particularly in simple vocabulary and short sentences. However, many students still struggled to speak fluently and felt awkward participating in discussions.

Based on the results of the analysis of the situations that occurred at SMP Garuda di Kota Tangerang, a community service program was prepared aimed at schools and especially for seventh and eight grade students and also English Club Extracurricular coaches at SMP Garuda where assistance is needed in developing topical based English Club Extracurricular curriculum and content syllabus based on the following:

1. Difficulty determining the purpose of English Club activities at every meeting
   Although English Club activities are extracurricular activities, it is important for the organizers of these extracurricular activities including extracurricular coaches to be able to have goals or outputs of English Club activities that are suitable for improving students' English language skills. It is important that there is a clear activity goal at every meeting at the English Club to ensure that the activity runs smoothly. The result of the discussion with the coaches and also English teachers at SMP Garuda was that there were quite difficult in determining the objectives of English Club activities at each meeting because there was no clear draft material of tool for the English Club Curriculum.

2. Limitations of English Club Extracurricular coaches in providing material
   The next problem is the lack of adequate material of English Club activities which was also delivered by the English Club coach at SMP Garuda. They stated that the material presented was not continuous with the level or lever of English club participants. The limited provision of this material is also caused because the extracurricular coach still does not understand what material should be and can be included in English Club activities. Thus, it is important for us to provide an English Club extracurricular curriculum tool which includes the syllabus and also the material for every meeting in English Club activities at SMP Garuda.

3. Reduced student enthusiasm in English Club Activities
   Through the results of discussions with extracurricular coaches, vice principals and also the principal of SMP Garuda, it was found that the results of the discussion were declining enthusiasm of students in English Club activities. The result of direct observations on several English Club activities that we found also showed that same evidence, that extracurricular participants were less enthusiastic in doing activities at the English Club. This may also result from the material presented and also the delivery of

material and topics presented at the English club. Therefore, there is a need for Need Analysis or needs analysis in compiling English Club activity materials that are in accordance with the interests of students.

The team was making an effort to offer some remedies can be seen as the following table:

Table 1. The matrix of problems encountered, solutions, outcomes

Problems encountered	Solutions	Outcomes
Difficulty determining the purpose of English Club activities at each meeting: English club is not just extracurricular outside of learning, without a clear goal, in order to improve students' English language skills, it is necessary to have the purpose of the activity.	Assistance in the preparation of curriculum tools including English Club syllabus and teaching materials that also show the objectives in each activity. Need analysis will be held as well as FGDs as well as intense meetings to compile the English Club extracurricular curriculum	Result of FGD activity reveals the development of questionnaires and distribution to the respondents: English Club coaches and the members of English Club
Limitations of English Club Extracurricular coaches in providing materials: The material used has not been maximized and has not honed the four language skills, namely speaking, listening, writing and reading	Assistance in making materials, worksheets and also other teaching materials needed during English Club activities that are also in accordance with the needs of E-Club activity participants at SMP Garuda to improve their English Language skills.	Result of Designing English Club Curriculum including topical and functional syllabus.
Reduced students' enthusiasm in English Club Activities: English club participants felt less enthusiastic about the activities carried out	Assistance in the development of Topical and Functional based syllabus for English Club Activities. Where the type of syllabus above is felt to be in accordance with the needs of SMP Garuda students to improve their speaking skills.	Result of developing English club modules based on topical and functional material

The elaborations of the above table are as follow:
    a. Need analysis questionnaire distribution
Prior to the formation of the English Club Extracurricular, the facilitator had to ascertain how the teachers and students felt about the English Club activity at school. Therefore, ten questions were given to them to find out what they thought was significant in the foundation of the English Club. The result of questionnaire as follows:
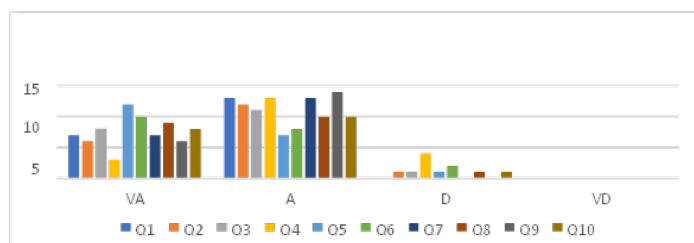
Figure 2. The Result of Questionnaire of the Topical and Functional Syllabus

The above diagram demonstrated that designing syllabus and material is needed. It was proved by the result of questionnaire that 14 students and teachers at SMP Garuda were agree that English Club must be design of syllabus and material for learning and teaching prosses. It is purposed to develop students' soft skills. The syllabus serves as a roadmap for organizing instruction, carrying it out, and providing follow-up. The components of learning include subject matter, learning methodologies, competency standards, learning fundamentals, time management, and resources, which include learning materials and tools.

The following figure is the activity the discussion of preparation community service (PkM), it can be seen as follows:

Implementation
Design

The first stage of this phase will involve designing digital teaching resources based on student analyses, curriculum and previous needs findings. The project team created the instructional materials throughout the design phase teaching materials changed according to the findings of the need analysis. To implement of topical and functional syllabus approach, the teaching materials are integration of English value. The details of the topical and functional syllabus are presented in table below:

FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUS	TOPICAL SYLLABUS
Example Functional Syllabus:	**Example Topical Syllabus:**

1. **Greeting and Introducing**
    o Functions: Greeting, introducing oneself, Asking someone's name
    o Example phrases: "Hello, my name is...", "Nice to meet you", "What's your name?"
	1. **Personal Information**
	    o Topics: Family, Friends, Personal interests
	    o Vocabulary: Family members, Hobbies, Daily routines

2. **Making Requests**
    o Functions: Asking for help, Making polite requests
    o Example phrases: "Can you help me with...?", "Could you please...?", "Would you mind...?"
	2. **Education**
	    o Topics: School life, Types of education, Learning methods
	    o Vocabulary: Subjects, Classroom objects, Study habits

3. **Giving and Asking for Directions**
    o Functions: Asking for directions, Giving directions
    o Example phrases: "How do I get to...?", "Turn left at...", "Go straight and then..."
	3. **Health and Fitness**
	    o Topics: Diet, Exercise, Health issues
	    o Vocabulary: Food groups, Types of exercise, Common illnesses

4. **Expressing Preferences**	4. **Travel and Holidays** o Topics: Travel experiences, Holiday destinations, Types of transport

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- Functions: Expressing likes and dislikes, Talking about preferences
- Example phrases: "I prefer...", "I like...", "I don't like..."

5. **Making Plans and Arrangements**
  - Functions: Making plans, suggesting activities, Confirming arrangements
  - Example phrases: "Let's meet at...", "How about we...?", "See you at..."

6. **Apologizing and Giving Explanations**
  - Functions: Apologizing, Explaining reasons
  - Example phrases: "I'm sorry for...", "Because...", "The reason is..."

7. **Expressing Opinions and Agreeing/Disagreeing**
  - Functions: Giving opinions, Agreeing, Disagreeing
  - Example phrases: "In my opinion...", "I agree with...", "I don't think..."

- Vocabulary: Travel verbs, Tourist attractions, Types of accommodation

5. **Work and Careers**
  - Topics: Jobs and occupations, Workplace environment, Career plans
  - Vocabulary: Job titles, Workplace items, Job-related activities

6. **Shopping and Money**
  - Topics: Types of shops, Currency, Spending and saving
  - Vocabulary: Shopping verbs, Types of goods, financial terms

7. **Environment**
  - Topics: Nature, Environmental issues, Conservation
  - Vocabulary: Natural features, Pollution, Recycling

Development

The project team created instructional materials based on the functional and topical syllabus. The instructional resources were included into a handout as students' material for E-Club, it can be seen the following figure:

Post-implementation
Evaluation

At the end of the program, reviewing PkM activities is the focus of the assessment stage. These activities are mostly in the core areas, which include the mentorship and development process run by a group of facilitators and PkM activity partners. To determine whether the activity offered is sufficient or whether additional action is required, this review is required. The result of the evaluation there are some of thing that must evaluated one of them is syllabus, it is still there some revision such as of the draft of standard competencies.

Post-test Results: After three months of curriculum implementation, the post-test results showed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills. Students became more fluent and confident in communicating in English, particularly on topics they had studied. The average post-test score showed an increase of 80% compared to the pretest results, indicating that the developed curriculum successfully enhanced students' English skills.

Qualitative Analysis: In addition to the quantitative results, feedback from the extracurricular instructors showed that students became more enthusiastic and active in participating in club activities. They began using English in daily interactions within the club, indicating improvement not only in technical skills but also in their confidence.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions with principals and English Club teachers, several conclusions can be drawn. First, it is essential for schools, teachers, and students to participate in Community Service (PkM) initiatives that support the establishment of English Clubs as extracurricular activities, particularly to boost students' English proficiency in speaking. Such initiatives provide both teachers and students with a comprehensive understanding of the English Club concept. Second, having a well-prepared curriculum and learning materials for the English Club significantly benefits both students and teachers in the learning process. Students are enthusiastic about participating in these extracurricular activities, and the school aims to use the English Club as a highlight for school accreditation. Finally, the English Club at SMP Garuda in Tangerang has been formally established. The next step involves gathering students to participate actively in this engaging platform to practice and improve their English skills.

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5. Acknowledgments

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