

# DESIGNING READING MATERIALS FOR TEACHING AGRO-TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT BASED ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING IN UNIVERSITAS ISLAM MADURA

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## Abstract

The basic goal of teaching and learning English at Agro-Technology Department is to develop the English skills of the students in order that they can understand and comprehend any English references such as textbooks, journals and other sources and they are able to communicate actively. The learning and teaching of English at Agro-Technology Department is considered unable to achieve its objectives. The main problem in this case is there is no an appropriate reading material for the students. The existing material is not in accordance with the needs and the background of the students. Concerning the problem above, a set of suitable instructional material for the students of Agro-Technology Department needs to be developed. The procedure being done in this study are doing need analysis, developing reading materials, expert validation, revising the materials, trying out the materials, and final product. The data from the result of the needs analysis shows most of the students agree to develop reading materials which are suitable with their major content subject namely Agro-Technology science, to include list of vocabulary in the reading materials they are learning, to include grammar review in the future reading materials, to clarify the content of the materials in the explanation, and to arrange the materials according to the degree of its difficulty

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, CLT (communicative language teaching), ESP (English for Specific Purposes)

## Introduction

Teaching English in school is getting popular. English is included in the secondary school curriculum and becomes the primary subject to be taught in every level. As international language English is very needed to be mastered for successful communication. Because English is very widely spoken, it has been referred to as world language or lingua franca. While English is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language around the world.

As international language among others language today, English indeed has played an important role in this modern world. Teaching of English language is a continuous process. As far as this educational activity involves a great deal of students in it and it is determined by many factors for its success, there have to be a systematic plan to improve its implementation. The task of the teacher is very important in planning courses, preparing teaching materials and teaching their class, and the students can get benefits from these plan.

English language functions not only as a language for science and technology, but also as a communication in Agriculture and Technology, multilateral relationship, and for career growth. Since it has great importance in this globalization time, the Indonesian government, therefore, through its national curriculum focuses its goal at improving students' ability in all integrated skills in English, including in the reading skill. As one of the language skills, reading has a major and crucial in facilitating students to learn a foreign language. The most important activity in any language class is reading. Reading is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also a means of consolidating one's knowledge of a language.

Reading is an important activity in every language. Reading enables people to find out some information from variety of the text, written or printed information, magazines, advertisements, brochures and so on. Reading is an important activity and becomes more important in this modern world, where the development in every life aspect occurs very quickly. As a part of language skills, reading plays an important role for the

success of language learning. In reading activity, we are not only reading the text, but also trying to understand what we are reading. Reading requires words recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Due to the importance of reading skill and lack of reading comprehension of the students, teachers are required to apply some different methods and materials in teaching reading that lead the students to the amazing atmosphere of teaching learning process.

The materials should fulfill the students' need because those materials will motivate the students to learn better and faster, whilst those materials relevant to the background knowledge of the students will help them achieve it. Beside the students' need and background knowledge, the reading materials also should suit the level of the students and offer a variety of exercises (Ellington, 1985)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Review of Related Literature**

English language materials here are divided into two categories, the first is general English and the second is English for specific purposes. As we know that general English is like an English language material that are learn at elementary, junior and senior high school. But, ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning<sup>2</sup>. The researcher thinks that ESP especially in reading material is also suitable used in Agro-technology department. Because, students in Agro-technology department need English materials that related with their department that able to supports their knowledge.

Language that are used in ESP is different that the language that are used in general English. ESP uses the language that accordance with the

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<sup>1</sup> Ellington, H. (1985). *Producing Teaching Materials : A Handbook for Teachers and Trainers*. London: Kogan Page Ltd, p.18

<sup>2</sup> Hutchinson, T and Waters, A. (1991). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning Centered Approach*. Cambridge University Press, p.9

purposes, for example language that used in hotel is different with language that used in bank or in hospital. So the purpose of ESP here is to make a specific purpose and to make the student easier in understand the material. Because ESP will help the student in master their department.

The main problem is that an appropriate English subject material for students was not available. The material used at present does not suitable with the needs and the background of students. Researcher tries to create reading materials with very important role and use a communicative language teaching.

Communicative language teaching is an approach to language teaching that emphasize interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Learning communicatively may help the learners have good relation even with the teacher and their peers, Brown (2000, p. 42)<sup>3</sup>. Learning communicatively also help the learners to study better because based on the writers' experiences in teaching learners must be guided to study actively. It can happen from their interaction with the teacher or their other friends.

Guiding learners communicating actively can the teacher do by asking for something that the learners know, so the learners are interested in answering what the teacher ask. Besides, getting students answer should be respected by the teacher because respecting and accepting learners answer can make learners more active. They may try to give their answer as they can without worrying whether their answer is correct or not. The teacher's role here accepting and correcting learners' answers.

It is very important to develop materials as a source of teaching and learning are the alternative to cope with the problems of learning English at Agro-Technology Department, by considering the needs and characteristics of the students. The materials are very important role that they determine the success of any teaching and learning process.

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<sup>3</sup> Brown, D.H.(2001). *Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

In teaching of reading, textbook of English for students are essential to help them learn English, especially for reading skill. The content to be learned was contained in the text and it was the lecturer's responsibility to teach that content to the students. The purpose of teaching and learning English at Agro-Technology Department is to develop the English skill of the students in order that they can understand and comprehend any English references such as textbooks, article, journal, magazine or newspaper and other sources.

Based on the preliminary study, material is more develop a grammar than text of reading. The materials do not appear to be effective since the texts are too general in terms of topics and contents. As a consequence, the students lack interest and motivation to study English. In addition, the presentation of the materials does not quite help the students improve their ability in learning English. The students should actually be able to learn many things from the material to enrich their English knowledge.

A lot of studies about material development have been done previously, and some of which can be much help in developing the English course material in this study. The research findings reviewed in this section are limited to material development especially in reading. For example the research that was written by Halim (1999), he developed reading comprehension materials for graduate students of the State University of Malang. Realizing the importance of textbooks in English for graduate students and the failure of some students to finish their study in due time because of their poor reading ability make her think it is necessary to develop good reading comprehension materials for the graduate students of the State University of Malang.

Another research was written by Usadiati (1999) who developed a model of ESP reading Materials for the Extension Program at the Faculty of Agriculture, Brawijaya University. The reason she pointed out in this study is that the students find it difficult to comprehend relevant textbooks and journals in their major content subject assigned to them, therefore ESP reading materials should be developed to help them. She assumes that the

students will have higher motivation and interest in reading English textbooks and journals when the model of ESP reading materials as the one to be developed is suitable to the students' need. The materials are developed based on the communicative Approach.

## **Research Method**

This study deals with the development of reading material for Agro-Technology Department, the appropriate design that the researcher applied is Research and Development (R & D). Borg and Gall (2003:772) stated that Educational Research and Development is one research designed aimed at developing and validating educational products. The steps were as follows: (1) research analysis, needs assessment and proof of concept; (2) product planning and design; (3) preliminary product development; (4) preliminary field testing; (5) product revision; (6) main field testing; (7) and the final product revision and dissemination (Gall, Borg & Gall, 2003). The Gall, Borg, and Gall model included added steps together with operational product revision and operational field testing. These steps were omitted due to the time and budget restraints of this research.<sup>4</sup>

Related by the theory in the previous chapter, the researcher conducts this research with the procedure below: 1. Need analysis, 2. Design or draft material development, 3. Result of expert validation, 4. Revision, 5. Try-out, 6. Final Product. However based on practical considerations related to the researcher' limitation in terms of time and material support, the researcher simplified the model by selecting and modifying some steps to be applied in the study.

## **Need Analysis**

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<sup>4</sup> Brog, W. and Gall, M.D. (2003). Educational Research: An Introduction. New York: Longman, Inc.

Need analysis is the process which is done by the writer for developing. In this step, the researcher looks for as much as possible from teachers and student. Some information which is collected by researcher is about reading materials existence, the problem of teacher and students in learning materials, their hope by reading materials are needed for developing Reading English materials for students.

In this part, the instrument is necessary to collect data in need analysis. The instrument that used in this step is questionnaire guide. The questionnaire is to obtain the information about students' English reading habit, existence of English s materials in the school, and their need about content of material. In this part, the researcher distributes pieces of questionnaire to students to find the problem that become difficulty in learning English. This activity also help the answer to decide the problem in learning. In this research, the writer just identifies the problem in reading skill. And also the researcher does an interview with the lecturer.

### **Materials Development**

The next procedure of this research is development of materials. The developing of materials based on the information that is collected by all from the analysis. Based on the students' thought that reading materials to be easy to understand, attractive, and communicative for students. In development of materials, the researcher takes supplementary materials from some books and internet. Paper and multimedia based to be material classification of the writer.

### **Expert Validation**

The validating to the expert is to know whether the planning product more effective or not. The researcher accepts the suggestion from expert and revises the product based on expert suggestion. The expert just give measurement rationally because the researcher who understands factual condition in the field.

### **Revision**

At the revision, the researcher will revise the developing supplementary reading textbook based on the feedback from the expert. It will help the researcher to determine the choices of questions of layout, instructions, cover, content, communicative aspect, and general aspect of the developed material. Based on Latief (2014:175) stated that data are needed and analyzed in the process of expert validation and empirical validation. In the process of expert validation, qualitative data from experts' judgment are collected and used as the basis of revision of the product being developed. In the empirical process, data are collected from students' opinion and achievement and are analyzed to give feedback for revision of the product.

### **Try-out**

After the product is revised as expert suggestion, the researcher conducts try out to obtain feedback from the field subject. Try out aims to collect data about applicability of the materials in term of difficult level, attractiveness, effectiveness, and usefulness. After try out step, the researcher needs to revise the product again to agree with real condition of students. The try out is done by giving the students reading materials. In the last meeting, the researcher asks students to fill the questionnaire about the materials as basis to revise. The object in on Agro-Technology Department.

### **Final Product**

The final product is the last step of the development procedures. The researcher needs to recheck the product until the writer confident that the product can be published perfectly. The book aims to improve students' ability to read English communicatively and enjoy classroom activity well. It also contains some pictures colorfully in order that the book more interesting for students.

### **Research Result**

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## **The Result of the Needs Analysis**

The data about the needs of the students was collected through the use of questionnaire and interview with the lecturer containing items about what reading materials the students of Agro-Technology Department. In this case, at second semester of Agro-Technology Department were involved to fill the questionnaire and the researcher does an interview with the lecturer.

Based on the result of questionnaire distributed to the students conducted with the lecturers, it was found that most of the students agreed to develop reading materials which are suitable with their major content subject namely Agro-technology science, and some students are disagree. Many of them acknowledged that the materials reading texts that have been taught before were very common and unmatched with their major content subject and also the major content of the materials before are understanding of grammar; therefore, the reading lesson which they once learned have not been able to assist them to comprehend texts or journals written in English.

To this agreement, they had the reason that the materials which are suitable with their major content subject enables them both to develop their academic knowledge in the major content subject and language skills they need to succeed in university. They also stated that when the reading materials developed correspond to their major content subject, they were able to update their specific knowledge in their specific area and have better understanding of their subject matter.

According to the result of interview with the lecturers, the reading materials for the students of Agro-Technology Department, Agro-Technology Department ought to be focused on the texts which have relation to Agriculture matters. This was with the consideration that to make the materials more interested and the students become more motivated to learn them as well as to make the learning more effective and the writer also adds the vocabularies to help the students comprehend the texts. For the students, the difficulties in comprehending the texts because

of their limited number of vocabulary. Finally, the interview with lecturers also indicated that since the materials have the purpose to make the instruction clear and focus, it is very important to include instructional objectives on the materials. It is hoped that the students know what they have to learn and the goal of what they are learning.

Beside the questionnaire and interview the researcher also develop the material based on the syllabus, the materials are tough in this department are appropriate with the student's need, and the materials should suitable with the syllabus. Actually this department is new at Agro-Technology Department, so, the syllabus is still arranged. Before the syllabus is perfect, the lecturer can gives some materials to the students freely. Here researcher develops the reading materials based on the syllabus that is still arranged.

### **The Result of Expert Validation**

When the researcher finished to design the material development, the researcher continued to the next step of this research, the researcher needed to validate the result of the book designing to the expert that have been chosen, it was the important step of this research because the expert could know the weakness of both the content and the layout of the textbook. Then, the expert revised it to make the better book.

The researcher also got an advice and comment from the expert. So, it was help the researcher to know the quality of the content and the design of the book because it could add the researchers' knowledge and experiences of designing book. At this process, the experts were given questionnaires to evaluate as well as to give comments and suggestions on the draft of the materials in the hope that the data obtained from the result of questionnaire can serve as a basis for revising the materials.

There were three experts that recommended validating the result of book material development. The first expert was a lecturer of Agro-Technology Department. The second was an English lecturer of English

Language Education in Universitas Islam Madura. She was a professional and experience English lecturer that have some kind of experiences, adventure of Education specifically English at local and board area such as Singapore and Malaysia. She had been published some kind of books, scientific products, and journal both national and international level. The last expert is a master of design, he gives some suggestion and comment in designing the product.

The first expert gave the researcher some revisions of English reading materials; because it was the first book designing so the researcher needs experts' suggestion to make it better. He said that the instruction was not clear in every activities of the textbook and also the typing is not well because there is no consistency in font and size. Focusing on the content of developed material in reading skill, the first experts stated that the supplement of the material of reading skill was good enough and the exercises were completely good and the students can easily understand about any information of the texts. Therefore, the researcher used appropriate vocabulary; it was not too difficult for the students and also the researcher have to put grammar explanation to increase the student's understanding about the structure of the texts.

## **Revision**

The next step of this research was revision after the researcher get validation of the book designing from the experts. As explain above that there were three experts of this book development. *The first expert* was a lecturer of Agro-Technology Department. He gave the researcher some revisions and comments about all aspects both the content and designing of the product. A revision was still considered necessary because there were some mistakes or drawbacks found on the materials. The revision of the materials was just based on the spelling and mistyping in writing text. The revision was to complete the typing of the materials. There were some missing words in the typing of the original materials. He appreciated the

researcher to give an easier instruction to the students that supported students to comprehend the text.

*The second expert* was a lecturer English Education in Universitas Islam Madura. She gave some correction to the product, all aspect both the content and designing of the product and she gave a good point to all aspect. *The last expert* is a master of design, he gave some suggestion and comment in designing the product.

### **The Try-out of the Developed Materials**

The revised drafts of the materials were tried-out to get feedback whether the developed material were fixed or needed to be revised. Because there was limited of time, only two units of the revised draft of the materials were tried-out: unit I and II. In line with this, a number of second semester students of Agro-Technology Department were selected to be the subjects of the try-out and they were involved in the try-out process. The researcher gave the book to the lecturer and he applied the material of the books and asked some questions related the development of the book to the students.

The try-out of the materials was conducted by giving the students the developed materials to be studied and by distributing questionnaires to the students at the end of the try-out class to collect data about the applicability of the material in terms of the level of difficulty, usefulness, effectiveness and to point the area of difficulties or problems that need to be revised. The students and the lecturer were involved in the try-out process to evaluate and give comments and suggestions on the developed materials.

After the try-out of the material had been finished, the subjects were given some tasks. The task given to the subjects consisted of comprehension, vocabulary and grammar test, but they were taken from different section of the units on the draft materials. On this task, the students produced a satisfactory result. The result of the task above indicates that the learning outcome of the students was good enough since

many of them could do well on the task given. This also means that there was a change after the students had used the developed materials.

### **The Final Product**

After the materials had been tried-out, the development of the materials in this study resulted in the final product which was in the form of reading comprehension materials for the students of Agro-Technology Department. The materials were developed on the basis of the data collected from the analysis of the needs of the students and revision was made based on the data collected from the experts during the validation process, the students and the colleague lecturer during the try-out process which is expected to help the students to learn English. Finally, the materials were still possible to be revised, if some weaknesses are found in its real implementation.

### **Conclusion**

The product reviews are drawn based on the research questions in the first chapter. They are the students' needs of Agro-Technology Department in learning reading and reading materials that are appropriate for the students.

The Learners' Needs in Learning Reading, in the preliminary observation, the students were observed to have difficulties in comprehend the text, they had poor participation in the their learning. Related to the problems above, reading materials that cover process-based approach activities were potentially helpful. All the students agree that reading should be suitable with their background. They also agree that reading skills are important for them. If in fact, their participation in the classroom was still low it means the students need reading materials that rise their motivation.

The Specification of Appropriate Materials for the Students, Based on the result of the materials evaluation, the product of this study is considered as appropriate materials for Agro-Technology Department

Students. The materials cover the students' needs and problems that were analyzed in the needs analysis stage. They can help the students to learn reading and overcome the difficulties in comprehend the text. Since the activities are more interesting and varied, the students are motivated to learn so that they are able to improve their participation.

The result of the study shows that the developed materials that cover activities in process including pre-reading, while reading and post reading have positive effects for Agro-Technology Department. They help and facilitate the students to comprehend the text, reflect mistakes in terms of grammar and mechanics and the most important, since the activities are more interesting and varied, the students are motivated to learn and are able to improve their participation.

The materials are developed based on the needs and interest of the students of Agro-Technology Department, so that it is considered appropriate, suitable, and applicable for the students, the texts on the material are exploited into several tasks that enable the students to develop their reading.

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