

ENGLISH FOR GENERAL PURPOSES; TEACHING MATERIAL APPROPRIATENESS RESEARCH AT TRIDINANTI UNIVERSITY

Yuyun Hendrety¹⁾, Jenny Elvinna Manurung²⁾, Rahma Dianti³⁾ M. Ardhi Firmansyah⁴⁾

¹⁾²⁾³⁾⁴⁾Universitas Tridinanti

¹⁾yuyun_hendrety@univ-tridinanti.ac.id ²⁾jenny.manurung@gmail.com

³⁾rahma_dianti@univ-tridinanti.ac.id ⁴⁾ardhifirman16@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated how lecturers designed their teaching materials and what constraints they encountered in using the materials. It was a qualitative research using a phenomenological design which involved lecturers of English as general subject at faculties of economic, engineering and teacher training and education as the respondents. To obtain data, the respondents were scheduled to deliver their responses in semi-structured interview. The findings revealed that the respondents selected their material on the basis of *RPS*. In order to fulfill students' need related to the major they have chosen, they used some eBooks of English for Business, Business Communication, Cambridge Online, *Bursa Efek Jakarta* and English for Engineering to select the material. The respondents realized the importance of integrating four language skills, since the limitation of time some of them focused their teaching on reading skill and vocabulary while some others put much pressure on practicing speaking and writing which they thought more important. Another finding also revealed that some constraints the respondents encountered during the teaching and learning process were: 1) some students were not very enthusiastic in learning, 2) some students were not confident, they did not join the class seriously and tended to show low comprehension in learning English, 3) some respondents stated that time allocation in teaching EGP was not enough and 4) they also had not enough time to check or give comment on students' work

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Introduction

English is taught integratedly covering the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Teachers of English for general purposes, such as secondary school teachers, might find it difficult to identify the future communicative needs of their students. Therefore, the teachers tend to feel that they are teaching English without any clear objective Abbot (1980) in Hunston and Oakey (2010). In addition, Hu (2002) mentions that this situation made students need English to pass examinations that test mainly grammatical and lexical knowledge. In other words, students' future uses of English is only for social mobility rather than any real communicative purposes

(Yong and Campbell 1995) as cited in (Hunston and Oakey, 2010).

At the university level, English which is taught to the non-English major is called English for general purposes (EGP). English for general purpose is delivered to prepare students to use English proficiently in oral and written communication. A policy to use English as a medium of instruction has been set up to meet the demand of university in Indonesia, Therefore, students are expected to achieve the mastery of their content courses and the international language, i.e. (Floris, 2008)

In addition to the previous statement, Liyanage and Birch (2001) mentioned that curriculum of the English for general academic purpose builds on student

awareness that there is a particular language of the academy, and certain ways of talking, reading and writing about ideas and texts which is familiarly called Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP builds on the students' acquisition of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), the verbal fluency needed in a target language for everyday informal situations.

However, the English curriculum for the non-English Departments was not sufficient to prepare students to attend classes in English. The objective of the course was merely to enhance the general English proficiency of the students, not to introduce the students to aspects necessary for attending subject classes in English (Floris, 2008).

Similar to the above idea, Liyanage and Birch (2001) stated that the need of the participants changed as the course progressed and it was often difficult to negotiate the curriculum content with students who had diverse needs. It is important, therefore, that the course content and the learning experiences be negotiated between the teacher and the students at the beginning of the course. Apart from teaching such students English language skills, it is also important to create understandings of the skills and knowledge expected of students in their academic studies, the problems likely to be encountered in adjusting to teaching/learning and how to reconcile their own academic orientation with the academic expectations of the program/institution.

Kakerissa and Lengkanawati (2022) in their research found that the non-English learners' biggest problem is lacking vocabulary that affects their English learning in listening, speaking, reading, and also writing skill. Another problem they face is that they require topics about the concrete things such as daily life and news items. They also need

knowledge that relates with English for their future, such as: public speaking material and writing a CV in English.

On the basis of his research, Floris (2008) found that the materials for the English course at the university should be designed to better meet the students' needs and institutional requirements. Further evaluation needs to be conducted on an on-going basis as evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning.

Another study of Floris (2011) revealed that students joining the English for General Purpose (EGP) course had positive attitudes towards learning English. Therefore English language teaching center and the course teachers should develop more motivational tasks to inculcate the students' positive strong desire to succeed in learning the language.

In other words, students taking English as general purpose tend to have positive attitude to learn English since they realize that English competence is needed for their future. However, on the basis of the above previous researches it can be concluded that the implementation of English for general purpose at university still need some improvement. Therefore, the researcher is interested to conduct a research related to the evaluation of teaching material appropriateness of English for general purpose materials at Tridinanti University.

As it is stated by McDonough and Shaw (2003) that there are some circumstances that require educators to evaluate their materials. They are when the educators have some options to develop their materials and when the educators are using others' people works (it means that the educators do not have a free option in developing the materials). Even though the fact that 'educators have freedom to choose the materials for evaluation and adaptation or not' is still controversial, evaluating

and adapting materials are still necessary.

Similar to the previous idea, Floris (2011) argued that evaluation, taking place at the end of the academic semester needs to be conducted on an ongoing basis. It had proven that it is useful as it provided valuable information. Therefore, the process of evaluation should form a major part of the design and implementation of language projects.

On the basis of the implementation of EGP at university level, some teaching materials are designed in order to fulfill students need on their major in which it tends to be familiar to be said as English for specific purposes. Some other major just teach English as EGP, or teaching English in general without specifically adapting teaching materials to student need related to the major the students have chosen. In teaching English language, the four language skills should be delivered integrately by delivering listening, reading, speaking and writing. The competence of being able to use English is usually measured by using those four language skills.

Maňák (2008) in Cerna (2022) suggested that the textbook as one kind of teaching material will gain new functions, such as a normative (unifying) function, since it should assist in outlining the subject matter and setting requirements/norms for individual school subjects and grades. This means that textbook research is therefore needed which will focus more on defining the curriculum in textbooks and defining/selecting the core curriculum and the ways in which teachers and pupils work with textbooks.

In addition, Cerna (2022) claimed that the textbook is likely to maintain a certain position in English classrooms, though its functions may change dynamically. for example, heuristic, informational, motivational, systematizing, controlling, integrating,

coordinating, and self-directing. The textbook is closely linked to the curriculum. Apart from other important functions, textbooks deliver the subject matter that is outlined at a general level in the respective framework education programs. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the contents of the textbook match the contents of the curricular documents.

Kakerissa and Lengkanawati (2022) also shared similar idea, they said that the lecturer must know about learner' wants and needs to prepare an in appropriate material/content that suits their wants, needs, and interest to avoid mistreatment in teaching and learning process.

Considering the above previous studies which mentioned that the lecturers and students need to communicate and negotiate before starting an EGP course in order that the course contents match to the students need, this research was conducted to find how lecturers designed their teaching materials and what their constraints in using the material were. By doing this research, the researchers expect that the results of the study would give benefits to the implementation of English for general purpose courses. In order that the EGP teaching and learning will be more effective which then will contribute to students, the lecturers and also the institution, Tridinanti University.

Research Methodology

The objective of this study was aimed Therefore, it utilized qualitative research design. Taylor, et.al (2016) stated that qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data; people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior.

Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives. Central to the phenomenological perspective and hence qualitative research is understanding

people from their own frames of reference experiencing reality as they experience it (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In this study, the researcher utilized a phenomenological design. As Oranga and Matere (2023) said that phenomenology looks to determine experiences from the participants' perspective. It essentially looks into the "lived experiences" of the participants and aims to explore why and how participants behaved in a certain way, from their (participants') perspective.

The subject of this study involved lecturers of English subject at faculty of economic, engineering and teacher training and education. There were four lecturers became the respondents or the subjects of this study. The four respondents were initialed as respondents NR, HS, DB and GT at the result and discussion section.

This study utilized interview as the instrument in the process of collecting data. The interview was done to all lecturers of English as general purpose teaching at three faculties, they were faculties of economic, engineering and teacher training and education. The instrument was validated by a lecturer of English from Raden Fattah Islamic State University. The validator suggested some improvements on the items of the instrument.

In order to check the rigor of the instrument, researchers also tried the instrument out before it was used to the non-subject of the study to find out whether or not the language used had been understood. On the basis of the tried out, there was only minor revision needed on the language use of the questions items of the questionnaire.

Then after that, the process of collecting data were done. The respondents were being asked in semi structured interview. The researchers made appointment with the respondents and then they took turn delivering their

responses on how they designed the materials and the constraints they encountered in using the material in class in the previous semester. The process of collecting data was done for four days. In a day, one respondent was scheduled to deliver her or his responses which took about 1 to 2 hours for each. The researchers took notes by typing the respondents' responses during the interview. With the data obtained, the researchers analyzed the data by organizing, transcribing, coding, classifying, interpreting and the last drawing conclusion in order to answer the research questions in this study.

Findings and Discussion

1) How the lecturers designed the teaching material.

From the four respondents, respondent NR stated that: the subject was very important since it could be used at the office like *PT. BA*. Therefore, if the students were familiar with it, they could use it especially for the companies that are cooperating with foreigners. In designing material, it was done by material compilation from different kinds of sources. The consideration in selecting the material was in accordance with the material they were taking. For example, when they were taking "Drainage class", then they would learn text which discussed about it. It was design based on the *RPS (rencana pembelajaran semester)*. The study program suggested NR to deliver material which was related to the major. Therefore, reading text was arranged from the easiest to the hardest, present tense and past tense was also delivered, and vocabulary was also taught. According to respondent NR, the students who were taking EGP should get the material that was related to students' major.

In teaching English, listening was not available. Speaking was done in which students were required to introduce product, explaining vocabulary about things in English. Reading was much exposed to students. Writing was conducted by making summary. Respondent NR realized the importance of integrating the four language skills, but the time limitation was the problem in which NR could not give listening skill exposure to students. Therefore, among the four language skills, respondent NR focused the teaching much on reading, comprehension which covers vocabulary and pronunciation in which by answering question means that the students could get comprehension on it. The learning objectives to achieve from the class were: 1) to familiarize students with vocabulary which is related to the major, 2) to practice pronouncing the vocabulary well, 3) to help them understand some basic structure, 4) to make students understand and have good interpretation on the text delivered. NR also mentioned that the material had fulfilled students' need enough.

Next, respondent HS stated that the English for general purpose is important subject. Students were needed to be given knowledge/insight on general knowledge of English with related vocabulary. Further, HS stated that the material was designed based on *RPS* which was made based on the discussion with other teachers of English or coordinator. It was done by compiling material from different kinds of sources. What to consider in designing material is that it is better to find reliable sources of material, the ones that are published abroad. It is also seen based on the content analysis by considering students' competence. Based on HS opinion, the four language skills were integratedly delivered in one material. It is important since in learning English the four language skills should all be acquired. In HS opinion, the learning

objective to achieve was students could use spoken English either for public speaking or for promotion need. Therefore, HS focused on the teaching of speaking during the class. According to HS teaching experience, students' ability in doing conversation is needed to be improved. For example, students need to be given the skill of promoting and public speaking. They did not need to learn much about the material dealing with verb tense or structure. They only need to understand general verb tense like present tense and some other common verb tense. In HS opinion, the material had already fulfilled students' need, but continuous improvement is still needed.

Respondent HS said that EGP students should be given material which was appropriate with students' major. For example, related to *Banking* for economic faculty students. They should learn vocabulary about *Banking*. They should be taught some relevant material with their major. In designing material, at the orientation or meeting 1, HS asked the students the material they need. The materials were listed and designed to be updated in accordance with students need. Then, HS designed the material by compiling it from reputable websites like *Cambridge Online*. For economic field, *Bursa Efek Jakarta* could be the alternative where he could find related teaching material. Then, they were chosen because they could give current information to students.

Respondent DB also mentioned that the four language skills were given to students since they are important. The four language skills supported each other. Some students were good at listening but not good at speaking, so it might help to understand students' competence. The guidelines in designing material were classroom observation (orientation), students need analysis and consulting to the ADDIE (analyze, design, develop, implement and evaluate) approach and

analysis of R & D (research and development). At the final project, students were expected to be able to acquire four language skills with a more focused on the ability to speak and write. Students were minimally able to speak passively (only understand but difficult to respond), writing business letter/correspondence, writing memo.

Respondent DB further mentioned that with the new RPS, it was very beneficial since it covered the vocabulary used for mechanical engineering for teaching at engineering faculty. EGP lesson is also important for developing students' soft skill which become added value for students later when they graduated if they can use English. Especially, if they can use it for applying for job, making CV, and doing job interview in English.

The last, respondent GT stated that English which related to information and technology is very important for self-development and career. For example, the opportunity to join students exchange program as one of the programs in *Kurikulum Merdeka* which enables students to study abroad. Computer and internet are all using English. Therefore, it is better that the students learn the material which connected to their field. For example, text, film about economic conference, banking, economic world, and terminology which related to the text. The EGP material was designed based on the *RPS*. In designing the material, there was a request from the faculty for not focusing on grammar. The material was taken from e-book English for business for intermediate level. In selecting the materials, GT scanned the table of contents first and selected the ones that were appropriate to students need. There should be at least reading, speaking, and writing. Speaking was done by story-telling. Writing was done by assigning students to write, rewriting a story, and defining terminology.

Respondent GT further said that delivering the four language skills is important since they are interrelated and inseparable. The material was designed based on the level arrangement, from easy to difficult one and the material which invites students to be active. One week before the class starts, students were asked to read and do the exercise, so in class the lecturer spend the time to discuss the exercise with the students.

Finally, GT stated that the learning objective to achieve was students were at least being able to acquire the material given each meeting. Further, they are expected to explore more by themselves. Writing was available but not much. They focused more on comprehending text and terminology. The respondent focused more on reading and vocabulary by using terminology. Especially for finding main idea, students were invited to find information at social media, written text, books and announcement. The material did not completely fulfil the students' need since time limitation. The material on *RPS* was achieved, but to make them mastering English the material had not covered all the skills yet.

2) Lecturers' Constraints in Using the Material.

Some problems respondent NR found in using the material was that some time a reading text found not accompanied by questions in which NR had to make it by herself. Then, some students lacked of seriousness in joining the class and got difficulty in understanding structure.

Respondent HS stated that what had been written down on *RPS* was not similar to all lecturer's aspiration. Therefore, not all lecturers delivered their lessons based on *RPS* and their expectation. HS did not find any big problem in using the material. It is

expected that there will be a system in submitting material in a form of application especially for checking mistakes which can be feedback for students for revision. Listening and speaking are given in high frequency. During the class, due to the big class, the lecturers needed to increase the sound volume especially for classes at noon. There was no speaker and the LCD which did not work well were also other constraints in using the material

Respondent DB shared some constraints in using the material, such as a difficulty to cooperate with other lecturers to add material like tenses or grammar. Speaking was done by instructing students to do presentation. Since they were not accustomed to do 100% presentation using English. Some students were nervous, shameful, and unconfident. Writing was done by asking students to make essay using *5w + 1 H*. The class ran smoothly in general, but some material which tended to be difficult for students was the history of electronical engineering. Students also found difficulty in describing the biography of founder of electricity. Electrical engineering class was conducive because DB and students had already committed at some points in the beginning in terms of attendance, assignment, learning system and scoring system. Other constraint is that the students of management were a little bit difficult to be managed. Especially in using gadget in class.

Respondent GT stated that some students could not comprehend the material very well, Topic sometimes was changed since they did not understand the one that was going to delivered. Students sometimes did not read the material. They knew nothing, so it made her need to explain again. They did copy paste. GT mentioned that actually the material was not too difficult, it was because of students' comprehension was low since

they just opened the book in class. There was no difficult lesson except those who did not have any background knowledge of English. Explaining in English was a little bit difficult for them to understand, so translation was done for each material.

Discussion

The findings revealed that all of the four respondents stated that EGP is important to be given to students since it could be used as beneficial insight and skill that are useful added value for students' future. Being able to use English will give some benefits to students where they could join student exchange program or even open wider opportunity develop their future career for their job.

In designing the material, most of them stated that used *RPS* or syllabus as their guidelines in designing the material. Some of them were suggested by the major in giving the material. Then, they found the material from eBooks of English for Business, Business Communication and English for Engineering to select the material, some of them stated that they found them from reputable websites. The material was chosen from different sources of material which fit to the students' need based on the major they have chosen. As it is already stated by Cerna (2022) that textbook is closely linked to the curriculum. Apart from other important functions, textbooks deliver the subject matter that is outlined at a general level in the respective framework education programs. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the contents of the textbook match the contents of the curricular documents.

Another finding revealed that the respondents had different point of view on the skill to deliver to students. They realized the importance of the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, but some of them

could not integrate the four language skills in teaching and learning. Most of them focused much on reading skill and much exposed on vocabulary which related to their major. The unavailability of audio for listening became one of the factors which made them difficult to make students get the learning experience where they could listen to native speakers of English. Some lecturers also mentioned that speaking was also difficult to execute since the limitation of the time. Some others stated that they could expose the students with speaking practice, since they think that it is very essential from them to practice the student's speaking skill for the future.

Related to the above finding, Ur (2012) mentions that tasks activating the four skills are the main basis for communicative practice since they are essential. The coursebook should provide texts and tasks that promote fluency and accuracy in the four skills in communicative situations, as well as activities that provide opportunities for students to do 'mixed-skills' activities.

Further, still dealing with the above finding, Liyanage and Birch (2001) as they have been stated previously that as the course progressed, the needs of the participants changed. When it was difficult to negotiate the curriculum content with students who had diverse needs, it is important to negotiate the course content and the learning experiences between the teacher and the students at the beginning of the course.

This is hopefully could become a communication which is expected to create understandings of the skills and knowledge expected of students in their academic studies. This communication is also possible to be done among lecturers to discuss anything for the sake of a more effective teaching of English as general purpose.

The lecturers stated that they found some students who were not very

enthusiastic in learning. Students did not join the class seriously. They even stated that they had not enough time to check or give comment on students' work, and again they said that it was caused by limitation of time.

The above findings could be the trigger for the lecturers to do evaluation on the effectiveness of EGP class. As McDonough and Shaw (2003) mentioned that there are some occasions which require educators to do material evaluation. Whether the educators use other people's works or they choose their own material, material evaluation and adaptation are still necessary to do. This idea is similar to what Floris (2011) stated that evaluation which is done at the end of semester is beneficial since it will provide valuable information for improvement. Hopefully, by doing evaluation, the lecturers might find the reasons why some students were not feeling enthusiastic and did not join the class seriously. It is also expected that the problem dealing with limitation of time could also be solved by doing evaluation on the effectiveness of EGP class.

Towards the findings, the researchers recommend that the respondents teaching EGP need to meet together to discuss what to teach. They also need to discuss what students find interesting to learn. The respondents at the beginning of the lesson might do a mini analysis to know what the students really need in order that they could arrange the lesson during the semester. By doing this, having RPS with mutual agreement is quite possible to be used as the guidelines in conducting EGP class. Also, it is expected that there will be a more balanced in exposing the four language skills to students since ideally, learning English will be better when those four language skills are practiced.

Dealing with the respondents' constraints, the researchers also recommend that the respondents should really prepare their teaching, a more

interesting English course will attract students interest in learning English. Then, the problems of limitation of time and the respondents inability to check students work can be solved by having good commitment and good time-management in teaching. By having it, they will manage their time well in order they could do the task. Also they could find some easy to check to exercise or to do a performance test in classroom.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above findings, it could be concluded that:

1. The respondents designed the material based on the *RPS*. They used eBook of English for Business, Business Communication, Cambridge Online, *Bursa Efek Jakarta* and English for Engineering to select the material to select the material which they thought could fulfill students' need related to the major they have chosen. All of the respondents agreed that the four language skills are needed to deliver to students taking EGP course, but some focusing much on reading skill, vocabulary or terminology related to students major, and basic structure, like verb tenses. They could not expose listening and speaking much because of the limitation of time while some others thought that speaking and writing skills were two skills to focus on. They invited students to practice their public speaking, and promoting. Practicing students writing skill by writing business letter like memos and correspondence.
2. The respondents experienced some problems during the teaching and learning process. They were: 1) some students did not feel very enthusiastic in

learning, 2) some of them did not join the class seriously, were not confident and tended to show low comprehension in English 3) the respondents admitted that it is the important to integrate the four language skills in teaching EGP, but they could not expose some skills especially listening skill to students. The another reason for not being able to practice students listening skill was also caused by the unavailability material for listening skill. Then, it was also a challenge for the the respondents to prepare for equipment, like speaker and LCD, 4) some of the respondents had not enough time to check or give comment on students' work. Therefore, any application to cope their problem is expected.

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