

**ENGLISH COURSE HANDOUTS  
USING TEXT-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING  
FOR STUDENTS AT BUDIDAYA TANAMANAN PERKEBUNAN  
POLITEKNIK PERTANIAN NEGERI PAYAKUMBUH**

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### ABSTRACT

This study is entitled English Course Handouts Using Text-Based Language Teaching for Students at Budidaya Tanaman Perkebunan Politeknik Pertanian Negeri Payakumbuh with Research and Development type. The subjects of this study were first semester students in the Department of Plantation Plant Cultivation, two lecturers of English Language courses, and two chairmen of Study Programs in the departmental environment. The instruments used were questionnaires, interview guides, and product validation sheets. The results of the study indicated that the current English language lecture material is General English which was not in accordance with the needs of students learning the language. Thus, it was necessary to develop English language material that can help students achieve learning targets. Text-based language teaching was used as a basis for learning because students need reading skills in English references to support their academic abilities. Other skills can be trained through activities that come from reading material in each handout. The products produced from this study are categorized as "valid" after being validated by experts with a score of 78.48 with a scale of 100. Student perceptions of handouts that are tested in a limited manner were interesting, easy to understand, and able to help them understand the lecture material given by the lecturer.

**Keywords: Handout, Research and Development, Text-Based Language Teaching**

### INTRODUCTION

Learning English is now regarded as one of the most important things students should do due to their ability to compete globally. Students in Indonesia are given English lesson even when they are so young but formally the lesson is given to

teenagers. General English is the most common material given to students in Indonesia. Vocational students are also given General English as the materials of their course. As a matter of fact, they need more specific lesson to support their major. The same thing happens in Politani Payakumbuh. English is the compulsory course for first, second, and third semester students.

The existing English Course syllabus states the objective of the English course is students should be able to comprehend scientific articles related to their major and to enrich students' vocabulary and expressions of the language. The grammar of the language is taught simultaneously based on scientific articles they read. The levels of English set in syllabus are Intermediate and Pre-Advanced.

Different thing is found in the list of teaching materials written in the syllabus. The materials of English courses are all about the tenses and parts of speech, then students are trained how to construct the sentences using those formulas, words, and expressions. It does not match to the objective of the course. Practicing reading skill is only a small part of material.

The researcher sees this phenomenon as the gap to start the research. The researcher thinks that a possible solution to this arbitration is to revise the syllabus and develop English course handout which is relevant to the objective of teaching English to students as stated in syllabus. Furthermore, there were no handouts for English course used recently in *Jurusan Budidaya Tanaman Perkebunan*. Students used something called *Buku Kerja Praktek Mahasiswa*. It contains theory and explanation about the lesson and some exercises to practice.

Revising the syllabus and developing the handouts will be a better solution for students and teacher as the user of the product. This assumption is based on the opinion that the handout was designed based on the students' needs and the objectives of teaching the language to students. It also contains more attractive practicing materials as the medium for the learners to speak the target language in their daily life. Consequently, it is able to improve the learners' English skill as demanded by the curriculum.

The identified problems in this study were the existing learning material was not in line with needs of students in learning the subject and also the expectation of the institution toward the students. The existing learning material did not support the high

expectation of what skill students should master after studying the language. Students need more opportunity to practice their English skill, unfortunately, the existing learning materials do not provide this opportunity.

Under these circumstances, there is a need to develop handouts to accommodate the students needs in studying the target language. It is regarded as better solution to overcome the problems happening during English class. Students are given less opportunity to practice the skills acquired during the long period of language learning. Students are merely listeners to what teacher presented in the class. Consequently, English is possessed as the passive skill.

There are four research questions in this study. All the questions are explaining the process of developing the handouts. Therefore, the purposes of the research are discovering the students' needs in learning English for their study, finding out the most suitable type of English course handouts for the learners in *Jurusan Budidaya Tanaman Perkebunan*, finding out the experts judgment on newly developed English course handout, and discovering the students and teachers perception about the new handout designed for the English course after it is implemented in a limited tryout.

## METHOD

This study applies the Research and Development research design which aims to produce handouts used for students in Politani. The stages of the research adopted the ADDIE model, stands for Analyze, Design, Develop, Implementation, and Evaluation. (Pribady, 2009). The cycle of ADDIE may take place continuously as a process to make the product become better. Needs analysis takes place before the researcher design the handouts to locate the suitable ones for the students. Based on the result of the needs analysis conducted previously, materials for teaching and learning English are designed properly. The next step to do is develop the materials based on the design carried out previously. Validating the product produced from this research was executing after development phase to check the validity of the handout developed. Revision is conducted based on the comments and suggestions if any. Testing the product to end user is an essential step to carry out as the step in implementing the newly developed materials. Instruments used for the research in the needs analysis and implementation

stage were questionnaires, interview guidance, and validation checklist forms. The interview guide was used in the analysis phase which was to confirm the lacks, wants, and necessities of learning English. There were two kinds of validation checklist forms applied in this research, validation checklist form for instruments questionnaire and interview guide, and the one for developed handout. Experts judgment data for development stage was gained by having the two experts to check the handouts. Validation checklist form was provided for the experts to give checklist on the items listed. During implementation stage, the validated handouts were tried out to students in the class. After the session, students were required to fill in the perception questionnaires. The data gained from the perception questionnaires were used to describe students and teachers perception toward the developed handouts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this phase, the researcher developed the designed handout to be real printed handout. The handout is started with stating information about handout and lesson number, topic of the lesson, title of the reading text, skills focus of the lesson, and terminal objectives of the lesson. The topic of handout 1 from lesson 1 for instance, is “The History of Agriculture”. The title of the reading text students found in handout 1 is “The Development of Agriculture”. In “Vocabulary Focus” section which is available in odd numbers of handouts (handout 1, 3, 5, etc), students are introduced to some terms commonly used related to topic of development of agriculture. Students can firstly guess the definition of the terms helped by some pictures available below in the vocabulary focus section.

Before starting reading the text provided in the handout, students must answer some questions in “Pre-Reading Activity” to dig their background knowledge about the history of agriculture in their homeland. Reading text provided in this handout has exercise on vocabulary focus where students need to match the word to its definition. For “Speaking Activity” in handout 1, there are two exercises students have to perform. The first one is composing comprehension questions and then work in pairs to answer the questions they have created. The second exercise is students work in pairs to

share what they have learned from the text. For “Writing Activity” part, students have to rewrite the history of agriculture based their comprehension using their own sentences. Students get the opportunity to practice their writing skill to compose more meaningful sentences compared to sentences they used to write in *Bahasa Inggris* 1.

In order to check the validity of the developed handouts, the researcher was assisted by the experts to validate the developed handout. The validation process was conducted by completing a set of validation checklist form which was developed based on guidance from *Panduan Pengembangan Bahan Ajar*, published by *Diknas* in 2008. The validator checked some aspects of the developed handout. The first aspect was the content of the handout which contained of six items. The second aspect was the language, contained of four items. The next aspect was the presentation, contained of five items, and finally the mechanics which contained of five items.

The average score for the handouts is 78,48. Further information about the validation score is as follow; the average score for the content of developed handout is 77.08 which is categorized into valid. It means that the topics being put in the developed handout was suitable with the students’ need. For the language aspect of the developed handout, the average score is 84.37, included to the category of very valid. The score means that the language used in the handout was easy to understand. The instruction, the reading text, and exercise available in the handout are fit to the language comprehension of the students of *Jurusan Budidaya Tanaman Perkebunan*.

The average score for presentation aspect is 70.00 which categorized as valid. The meaning of the score was the presentation of the developed handout needed to be improved. Further explanation about the comments from validator will be found later in the suggestion part. And finally, the average score of the mechanics of the developed handout is 82.50, categorized as valid. The average score gave us the meaning that mechanics aspects such as type and size of the font used, lay out, illustrations and pictures, space for taking notes, and the attractiveness of the developed handout was sufficient to be used permanently.

There were some comments and suggestions from the experts taken as the contribution toward the handouts. The researcher then revised the handouts according to experts judgment. True-False exercises were removed from handout 1 and handout 5.

As the replacement, the researcher tried to facilitate the students in checking their comprehension about the reading text by giving them some comprehension questions.

The researcher added audio podcast about people giving agricultural counseling to a group of farmers in Handout 8. The audio podcast was about how to control insects by mixing plants. The Audio script was also provided only in case students needed helps. Next revision is adding the objective of learning the grammar focus or language focus of each handout to make students able to understand the reasons for studying it.

The last suggestions from Validator 2 was to make students to do free reading or independent reading which means students must read as many as reading sources they can find related to the topic of the lesson. Lecturer must inform this in advance to make students have sufficient time to find the reading sources and to read them. Students then must share to the classmates what they had read and classmates may question them about what they had read. In case students read the same article, it would be fine because their understanding about the text would not be exactly the same. This activity would be interesting and challenging for students and hopefully may create an active circumstance in the classroom. This activity forces students to practice their reading and speaking skills.

The developed handout was tried to be implemented in the class. It was a limited tryout of the handout conducted after the English course handouts were checked and validated by the expert. Two classes of *Manajemen Perkebunan* study program were chosen as the participant of the limited try out. There were 35 (thirty five) students of *Manajemen Perkebunan* joined the try out session and they then participated filling in the questionnaire about the developed handout. Developing and providing interesting handouts for students as a tool in teaching and learning is exactly the same principle as promoting goods to customers by providing interesting packaging of the product. According to jarvis-store.com packaging is one of the elements which influence users intention to buy or to use the product. Packaging functions as the cover to protect the product, point of attraction, and promotion tool. The same rule can be valid in English class. Most students are eager to study when they find interesting books and other helping tools in terms of color, pictures, and font used. Around 57.1% of students

agreed that the layout of the developed handout was interesting; around 31.4% students said they strongly agree that the handout had an interesting layout. Meanwhile around 11.4% students said they disagree that this developed handout had interesting layout. The numbers meant that students of *Manajemen Perkebunan* regarded this developed handout which is one of the tools used in the English course to study the language as an interesting one.

A handout is paper-based resource used to support teaching and learning which can free students from excessive note-taking or supplement information not easily available elsewhere, says McShane in Feez and Joyce (1998). Ideally it should aid learning and may increase attention and motivation and help students to follow the development of an idea or argument. Serious students write everything they hear during lecture on a paper or book, yet eventually they found that not all of them were necessary to be written. Therefore, sufficient space is important for students to have in their handouts. About 37.1% strongly agreed that they found the handout had enough space to make notes. About 45.7% students agreed to this statement and only 17.1% students said that they disagree to the statement the developed handout had enough space for them to write notes. It can be concluded that there was enough space for students to write any notes while listening to the lecture during the English course.

Around 60% of students agreed to the statement that the developed handout contained an easy to understand instructions. It means that more than half of the respondents said so. Meanwhile, the other the respondents said that they 20% strongly agree to the statement and another 20% were disagree to the statement that the developed handout contained an easy to understand instruction. It can be concluded that no revisions on the language of instruction were necessarily made by the handout developer.

## CONCLUSION

According to the study has been conducted, there are some conclusions can be drawn. First, students at *Jurusan Budidaya Tanaman Perkebunan* need English skill to support their academic study. The course materials delivered to students should be based on their major, not General English. Therefore, the researcher developed English

course handouts referring to English for Specific Academic Purposes for the students. Second, the base for developing these handouts is text-based language teaching. The reason is based on the needs analysis result that students need receptive skill more than productive skill in supporting their academic study. Therefore, reading and listening are the major activities students have for the skill practice. Other skills could be explored simultaneously when students performing activities as instructed in the handouts. Next, the developed English course handouts were validated by two experts. Handouts are categorized as valid to be used by the students. Very valid category was given to language and mechanics aspects, and valid category was given to content and presentation aspects of the developed handout. Finally, students and teacher take the handouts as helpful tool to learn English because it has easy to understand language of instruction. Furthermore, the learning materials and the exercises provided in the handouts can accommodate students to practice English and achieve the learning target.

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