

# Developing English Material of Agriculture for Students of Secondary School

**Moh. Mahmud & Sugiyono**  
IAI Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi  
(mohmahmud060578@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

A lot of seventh grade students of SMP Plus Al-Mubarak found many problems in understanding their English instructional materials. On the other hand, designing English Materials of Agriculture for students in SMP Plus Al-Mubarak Kalisat, Jember can motivate them in learning English better. Agriculture was considered an interesting learning material by the students as found in the result of needs analysis. Agriculture is specifically a relevant topic for students resided in Jember. Concerning these problems, a set of suitable instructional materials of English for the students of SMP Plus Al-Mubarak is needed to be developed. In addition, instructional materials should facilitate the students to enrich their experience, build their knowledge, and construct their comprehension. The instructional materials should consider where the students' life, culture, background, interest, and their ability. The procedures being employed in this study following that of Research and Development include; collecting information, developing instructional materials, conducting expert validation, revising the materials, and finishing the submitted product. To collect relevant information for a basis of developing materials, the interview with the teacher and students and classroom observation were carried out to complete the information provided in the existing materials. The product of this research is five units of English materials of agriculture focusing on the second semester.

**Keywords:** Materials of agriculture; integrated skills; integrated texts.

K13 Curriculum, the current curriculum applied in Indonesia, instructs schools, and eventually teachers, to develop English instructional materials to help students gain the objectives of the study set by the government. Instructional materials should facilitate the students to enrich their experience, build their knowledge, and construct their comprehension (BSNP, 2006). The instructional materials should consider where the student

lives, their culture, background, interests, and ability.

Reviewing the demands from the curriculum, therefore, it is necessary to design English materials with local topics from students' area to make learning more meaningful to them and contextual so as to motivate them to learn English better. Based on the needs analysis given to students in the second semester, it was found that

the materials preferable for the material is local content in Jember which focuses on agriculture. However, some additions to the material would present which are still in line with Jember local materials such as traditional food, and tourism place.

Textbook for junior high school is the textbook which presents standards of competence and basic competence for junior high school covering transactional conversations (to get something done), interpersonal conversations (to establish and maintain social relations), short functional texts (invitation, greeting card, announcement, advertisement, etc.), and monologs and essays of certain genres (recount text, descriptive text, narrative text, etc.). In other words, these are the communicative competence (discourse competence, socio-cultural competence, linguistic competence, and strategic competence) to be developed in the teaching (BSNP, 2006).

Harmer (2007, p.69) stated that developing the instructional material must concern with the essential concept of contextual-teaching and learning (CTL) which is encouraging learners to participate in real-world communication through a series of communicative tasks the students complete by making equal between fluency and accuracy. CTL may be a considered an approach that is believed to be potential for making the teachers' teaching possible in performing their work in the classroom in their attempt to facilitate students' learning to enable the students to relate subject matter contents with the real-world situation (Muhrofi, 2011, p. 45). Any educational processes implied by contextual teaching and learning (CTL) aim at helping students' comprehension of the academic materials they are studying by connecting academic subjects with the contexts of their daily life.

There are seven pillars of characteristics of contextual teaching and learning as synthesized by Suyanto (2002) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Pillars of CTL and Their Tasking

No	Pillar	Tasking
1.	Constructivism	Sequencing, student-centered exercises, brain storming
2.	Questioning	Question, question and answer
3.	Inquiry	Game puzzle, problem solving
4.	Modeling	Clear instruction and example
5.	Learning community	Think-pair-share, group work, field trip, discussion
6.	Learning community	Think-pair-share, group work, field trip, discussion
7.	Reflection	Rounding up, drawing conclusion

Textbook as instructional material is primary tools that teachers use to organize their lesson and make content knowledge and skills available to students. In addition, the textbook availability allows teacher to save the time in preparing material of teaching (Grant, 1977, p. 7)

To design materials to cater to the learners' needs is no doubt necessary, and I believe it can be done by adapting existing resources appropriately (Kitao, 1995). In creating materials, developer needs to connect curriculum to syllabus to learners. When the writer creates for a local student, she/he should be familiar with the students' need, their age, culture learning style, their motivation, etc. Dubin and Olshtain (1986, p.167) stated that the developer at least should use her/his experience with a known group of learners and a known instructional material then project these needs onto a wider framework.

There are some principles for designing language teaching materials proposed by Nunan (1988, p. 1) in Muhrofi (2011, p. 35-36) as follows: (1) material should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve, (2) material should be authentic regarding text and task,

(3) material should be stimulating interaction, (4) material should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of the language, (5) material should encourage learners to develop skills, and (6) material should encourage learners to apply language skills the world beyond the classroom.

In selecting and developing local topic, there are some points requiring serious attention; first, local topic taught at primary school has to be very meaningful to make the curriculum more comprehensive and relevant. If local topics are well developed and suited to primary school children, it make children more interested in learning. They will get the chance to know and study about the topic related with their lives, surrounding, and culture. Second, the local topic must be scientific, educational, practical, and relevant. And the last, developing local content can be geographical feature, flora, fauna, cultural activities, traditional musical instrument, typical art work, and production.

## Method

The research was conducted following Research and Development principles as stated in in Latief (2010, p. 101). It is stated that Educational Research and Development (R & D) is a process used to develop and validate educational products. The steps of this process are usually referred to as the R & D cycle, which consists of studying research findings pertinent to the product to be developed, developing the products based on these findings, field testing it in the setting where it will be used eventually, and revising it to correct the deficiencies found in the field-testing stage. In more rigorous programs of R & D, this cycle is repeated until the field-test data indicate that the product meets its defined objectives behaviorally. In this study R & D was used to develop English materials of agriculture for secondary students of SMP Plus Al-Mubarak. The researcher followed some steps adapted from Borg and Gall (1983) as follows: (1) need analysis and reference study, (2) material development, (3) expert validation, (4) revision and (5) final

product.

The number of the students involved for the subject of this study is 30 students to involve in the process of obtaining information and needs analysis. Besides, an English teacher in the school was also involved in the needs analysis conducted in the interview stage and questionnaires.

Some related literature studied here include English curriculum for junior high school, concepts of contextual learning and meaningful learning, obtaining the data of Jember local content as a local topic, and also by concerning Basic Competences of English curriculum for Junior Hugh School for the seventh grader that will be reached through the local topics of Jember.

In this study, the needs analysis was conducted to obtain as much information as possible in any given situation in a field. The information from the students and the teachers were needed to develop the material. The questionnaire for obtaining information consists of eight questions which related with their perspectives of English that was obtained in the first semester, their motivation in learning English, difficulties in learning language components and skills, their awareness of the benefits of mastery of the English, and their preferred learning model in the classroom.

The questionnaire of needs analysis aimed at collecting students' needs in four aspects such as significance of the needed skills, the content materials, the teaching model, and the book design needed by students. The first used is a set of questionnaire with 12 questions.

**Table 2.** Subjects of Study for Need Analysis

No	Subject of Study	Num-ber	Data Collection
1	Seventh grade students of SMP Plus Al-Mubarak	30	Questionnaire
2	English teacher	1	Interview

Questionnaires, interview guidelines, and observation sheet are employed to get the data. There are two kinds of data in this study, namely qualitative and quantitative type. The qualitative data are in the form of suggestions, comments, criticism, idea, language correction and note. Meanwhile, the quantitative data are in the form of figures/score assigned by the subject.

At this step, the developer begins to select carefully what contents are presented in the textbook materials based on the needs analysis. If local topics are taught related with competences of the applicable curriculum, they will make learning English more contextual

and communicative. If local topics are well developed and suited to primary school children, they can cause more interests for the children. These can connect students to their environment.

The result of needs analysis becomes a base for how the course developer write what content will be for the materials. The materials mapping presents English materials with Jember local content or SMP Plus Al-Mubarak Kalisat, Jember.

The procedures are described as follows: (1), the researcher reviewed the product to make sure that all the suitable principles have been applied in the development of

**Table 3.** The Results of the Research

No	Indicators	Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Students' perspective of English	a. Very like	5	17%
		b. Like	15	50%
		c. Ordinary	8	27%
		d. Do not like	2	7%
2	English value that was obtained in the first semester	a. Above KKM	15	50%
		b. Same KKM	10	33%
		c. Under KKM	5	17%
3	Students' motivation in learning English	a. High	9	30%
		b. Medium	13	43%
		c. Adequate	5	17%
		d. Lacking	3	10%
4	The difficulties the students encountered in English	a. Very difficult	16	53%
		b. Difficult	9	30%
		c. Quite difficult	3	10%
		d. Easy	2	7%
5	Students' difficulties of English in terms of the language component	a. Grammar	10	33%
		b. Vocabulary	10	33%
		c. Pronunciation	7	23%
		d. All	3	10%
6	Student's difficulties of English in terms of the language skills	a. Listening	8	27%
		b. Speaking	9	30%
		c. Reading	8	27%
		d. Writing	5	17%
7	Students' awareness of the benefits of mastery of the English	a. Very significant	12	40%
		b. Significant	10	33%
		c. Quite significant	6	20%
		d. Not significant	2	7%
8	Students' preferred learning model in the classroom	a. Lecturing	3	10%
		b. Presentation	3	10%
		c. Group work	19	63%
		d. Combination	5	17%

the product. (2), the expert validated the product and it revised accordingly to get quality assurance. A material development may need validation from experts in classroom instruction, assessment, illustration, etc. In this study, the content, language, activities/task, the design of materials development was validated by expert.

### Results and Discussion

Needs assessment was done through some questionnaire for obtaining information and questionnaire for needs analysis. The first questionnaire to collect data was given to the English teacher to get information about responses of the developing English material. The result based of this process was displayed in Table 3.

The second questionnaire to collect data was given to the English students to get information about their responses of the developing English material. The result based of this process was displayed in Table 4.

#### Result of Interview

According to the teacher, in general, the first year students were enthusiastic to learn English. However, they sometimes feel difficult in learning English. This problem encouraged the researcher to investigate what was actually going on.

There were many reasons when the students said that English is hard. When the researcher tries to find out the problem, it is found that they were not familiar with the some English words in their book. Moreover, the topic was not interesting to them.

The second question discusses teacher's opinion and suggestion about developing English materials. The teacher stated that a good material is one of the factors that are important in teaching and learning process. Focusing on this, the teacher also said that the material must be familiar with their surrounding and their life.

In designing the materials, the developer needed a big suggestion. It is related

to the topic area, and the models of the book. Especially about the chosen topics, the teacher suggested that the topics must represent the actual life. All the topics that students need were about their surrounding which related with their daily life. The level of difficulties must be limited, so the students got easiest topic to learn. Moreover, the teacher suggested that the materials should be attractive and interesting provided with pictures.

#### Materials of the Textbook

**Table 5.** Units in the Textbook EMA

Unit	Topic
(1)	My Father is a Farmer
(2)	Pests in Tobacco
(3)	How to Plant the Tobacco.
(4)	It's Time to Harvest the Tobacco
(5)	Jember is My Hometown

**Table 6.** Suggestions, critics, and comments

Expert Validation 1
a. The materials overall are good.
b. The expert personally feels that the book title is logically cumbersome somehow.
c. There still a number of grammatical errors pertained to the text.
d. The expert gives comment about "Learning Review" in textbook. He says that it is good and it might help the students to retain their learning better and easier.
Expert Validation 2
a. The questions related to the text must be shorted from literal to inferential.
b. The functional text must be presented before the genre.
c. For listening activity, students were asked to give respond.
d. For speaking activity, students were asked to express.
e. The textbook need much exercises.
f. The available pictures and color are presented the students' real-world

### Conclusion

English Materials of Agriculture is a kind of English materials based on K 13

**Table 4.** The Result of Questionnaire of Needs Analysis for Students

No	Indicators	Responses	Total	Percentage
1	Skills priority needed by students from the most to the least important	Listening	5	17%
		Speaking	8	28%
		Reading	15	51%
		Writing	2	4%
2	Student opinion about the benefits of listening	a. Understanding English lesson in the classroom	9	30%
		b. Understanding songs/films	7	23%
		c. Understanding conversation	14	47%
		d. Others	0	0%
3	Student opinion about the benefits of speaking	a. Presentation or discussion	2	7%
		b. Everyday conversation	22	73%
		c. Sing a song	6	20%
		d. Other	0	0%
4	Student opinion about the benefits of reading	a. Understanding genres	14	47%
		b. Increasing vocabulary	9	30%
		c. Practicing pronunciation	7	23%
		d. Others	0	0%
5	Students' difficulties of English in terms of the language component	a. Grammar	10	33%
		b. Vocabulary	10	33%
		c. Pronunciation	7	23%
		d. All	3	10%
6	Student opinion about the benefits of writing	a. Make sentences	11	37%
		b. Make paragraphs	12	40%
		c. Write stories	7	23%
		d. Others	0	0%
7	Students' awareness of the benefits of mastery of the English	a. Very significant	12	40%
		b. Significant	10	33%
		c. Quite significant	6	20%
		d. Not significant	2	7%
8	Students' opinions about the need for English language teaching materials appropriate to the surrounding environment	a. Really need	10	33%
		b. Need	17	57%
		c. Less need	3	10%
		d. Do not need	0	0%
9	Student's impression in teaching model when they were in elementary school	a. Exciting	20	66%
		b. Boring	7	23%
		c. Monotonic	3	10%
		d. others	0	0%
10	Students' required in learning model	a. Grammar-based	6	20%
		b. Contextual-based	19	63%
		c. Speech	5	17%
		d. Others	0	0%
11	Student opinion about the textbook picture easier to understand the material	a. Very easy	21	70%
		b. Easy	6	20%
		c. Quite easy	3	10%
		d. Less easy	0	0%
12	Students preferences on the illustration	a. Colorful pictures	16	53%
		b. Black and white pictures	0	0%
		c. Colorful photo	14	47%
		d. Black and white photo	0	0%

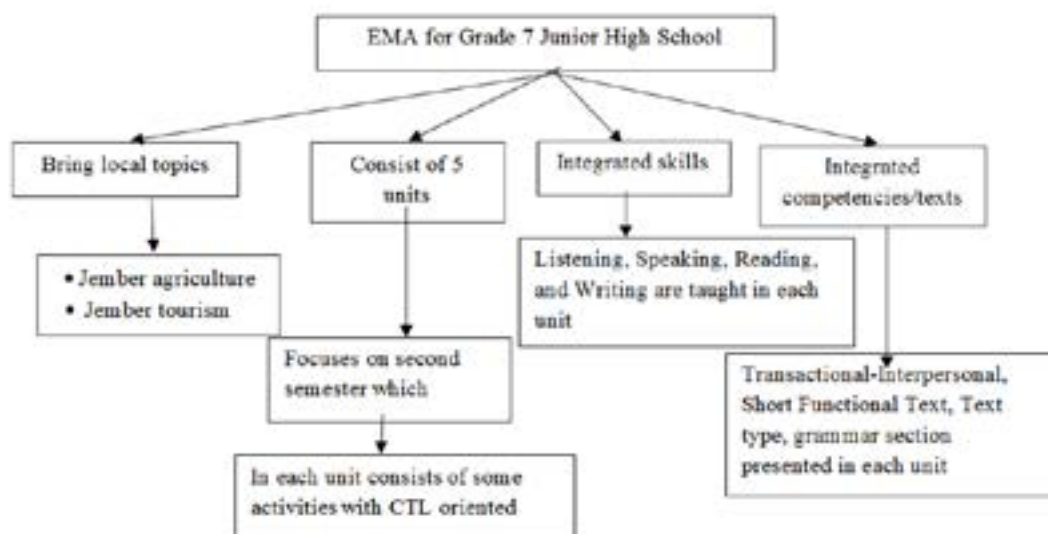


Figure 1. The characteristics of the materials

curriculum and students' needs which combine local content for the seventh students of SMP Plus Al-Mubarak Kalisat, Jember. It is: K 13 curriculum-oriented, student-centered learning, meaningful, contextual, and attractive with color and stimulating authentic images and photographs.

The strengths of the book are that it is completed with examples of such kind of expressions based on standard competence and base competence, and the explanations about text genres (descriptive and procedure text). The authentic pictures completed in each material to make students easier in understanding the materials. However, related to the weaknesses of the products, the materials needed for the try out to gain more inputs from the students so that the materials would be much better.

It is suggested that teachers should have known the objective of each lesson. They must know well about their students since the materials are intended for facilitating students' need. And the teachers be more creative in using the materials especially in giving variations to the students' activities which the materials around students first before moving to global materials in order to help students develop connected understanding of wider topics.

For further researcher, it is suggested to conduct the same study for different grades, for grade VIII and grade IX. Meanwhile, because not all of the topics in the developed student book are completely tried, it is suggested that the researcher conduct more complete and perfect evaluation to make more valid based on proper tryout.

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