Students' Expectation toward the Needs of English Textbook for Flight Attendants

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the needs of English textbook for flight attendant candidates undergone training in the flight attendant school. It is intended to examine the students' expectations toward how the textbook would help them in mastering English. A pre-course questionnaire containing open-ended questions was distributed to ten flight attendant students. The questions included technical aspects such as the size or type of the font and its layout; content including the degree of the language used and the number of pictures as an illustration; practice section including exercises and examples for conversation; and activity section including gamification, projects, and presentations. The results showed that the students tend to look for textbooks containing a wide variety of authentic expressions in running the service for the passengers. Students also opt for ones with fewer grammar theories and a sufficient amount of

speaking practice activities which will be beneficial in the long run. Eventually, students gave inputs on the draft of the first chapter.

INTRODUCTION.

The field of airline services has been vastly evolving with the ultimate goal of serving the passengers better. The opportunity to work in international-scale airline services is also widely opened. To be able to compete in this particular world, one must have good English skills which start with a well-designed training program at the pre-service level. Therefore, teaching English to prepare the students for these challenges must be carefully designed, including the use of the textbook.

Textbooks are widely used in teaching English[1] whether it is commercially or personally produced[2]. However, the use of commercial textbooks is accompanied by the personally-produced teaching materials which shows that this type of textbooks cannot satisfyingly fulfill students' needs. Furthermore, there are various reasons why one develops personally-produced teaching materials including considering its connectivity with the field that is being learned and its suitability with the students' competence level[2]. In the world of ESP, it is very common for teachers to develop their teaching materials due to some reasons: (1) The common textbooks are not suitable with the students' competence or level[3], (2) Teacher wants to emphasize more on the certain skills yet the books do not provide an extensive[4] and elaborative practices on the particular skills, (3) Problems with contextualization such as the unfamiliar use of the setting[1] and the difference on the cultures.

Designing an English textbook needs to consider these aspects and the students' expectation particularly on how the students want the books to be like and how they want it to help them learn the target language better.

Literature Review

The flight attendant at a glance. Flight attendants are a specially-trained group of people who serve passengers on the plane. Their basic qualification of the flight attendants based on Felix,

Neto, Smith, and Pedersen (2014) includes being able to accommodate the needs of the passengers such as taking care of their belongings, performing life-saving emergency procedures when necessary, and having a solid knowledge of the types or aircrafts[5]. To add, Haneda (2018) argues that flight attendants' main job is to serve the passengers as well as to make sure that they are at maximum comfort and safety[6]. Passengers needed to be served are both domestic and international ones whose oral communication takes place almost all the time.

Since English is the most common language used to communicate by the international passengers[6], flight attendants need to have at least acceptable speaking skills. Besides, Xiaoqin and Wenzhong (2016) urges to focus on teaching the speaking skills as the majority of the flight attendants cannot perform well on international flights due to their poor English proficiency[7]. With that being said, speaking skills have to be taught intensively during the training session because it is an essential skill that has to be mastered according to students' future work life[3].

Target Situation Analysis

Needs analysis is essential for every course design and has been acknowledged by the experts[8][9][10][11][12]. Needs analysis consists of various types, one of which is the target situation analysis. Target situation analysis is broadly explained by Munby (1978) as a result of the consideration of placing the learners' purposes as the main focus in the needs analysis[13]. Some of its features include participants, communication needs processor, profile of needs, meaning processor, language skill selector, the linguistics encoder, and communicative competence specification[10].

Method

This is a descriptive case study aiming to analyze students' expectations toward what kind of textbook they think will help them the most, an open-ended type of questionnaire was distributed to ten students currently going to be enrolled in a flight attendant training session. This study used open-ended questionnaire to enable the participants to answer thoroughly, and give the participants

freedom to answer the questions according to their preference. There are five questions on the questionnaire, two of them are related to the content of the book such as the degree of the language used and the topics of the book that need to be included. The other two are related to the number of tasks and activities carried out in the classroom and the learning activities. The last question is about the technical aspects including the type and size of the font. A series of web conference interview was also carried out to let the students express what they mean by their written answers. All of the students' answers and the results of the interview are collected and analyzed using a descriptive case study technique.

SETTING OF THE STUDY

This study was carried out at Flight Attendant and Airline Staff Training (FAAST) Penerbangan. It is a formal high school-graduate institution for training the flight attendant and airline staff candidates whose students come from the various province in Indonesia, mostly from the eastern part of the country. There are two training majors namely the Flight Attendant and Ground Staff. The training programs take place for six months including the On the Job Training (OJT). FAAST Penerbangan is located at Jl. Siliwangi, Mlati Krajan, Sendangadi, Kec. Mlati, Kabupaten Sleman, Yogyakarta, and currently is building its second office at Jl. Laksda Adisucipto KM 6.7, Caturtunggal, Depok, Sleman. This study puts its concern at the Flight Attendant program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the students' needs and their expectations toward future teaching and learning activities are essential to be discovered before a certain course starts because they are one of the sources to develop the course. In this study, the results of both the questionnaire and interview are described simultaneously and in order based on the questionnaire.

What kind of textbook do you like?

10 responses

yang gampang

yang mudah dipahami miss. jangan pk bahasa yg terlalu sulit saya bingung

mau yang nggak susah miiisss.. saya gabisa bahasa inggris

suka yg tebel miss dan kompliiitttt. sama jangan susah susah bahasanya

Saya suka yang komplit sih miss.. tapi jangan membingungkan. sama jangan susah susaaahhh

yang komplit tapi ndak susah dipahami. kan sering banget miss buku di gramedia itu bagus bagus tapi susah susah dipahami

mau yang lengkap kap kap kap tapi jangan susah dipahami

i want a complete one. but make it easy to understand

Suka yang komplit tapi simple... I like to open books with meaning jadi tidak kesulitan mengartikan

Figure 1. Students' responses to question number 1

For this question, most of the students did not have much to write on the questionnaire, however, some keywords can be extracted namely "complete", "simple", and "easy". After conducting the interview session, most of the students mentioned the same criteria: (1) textbook must be complete but it must contain (2) simple explanation using simple language instruction to help them learn English (3) easily and effortlessly compared to the books they had when they were in high school. At this point, those three criteria are important since they only have five months to work on their English skills. Further discussion about how they want the instruction to be like was developed and ones with imperative functions are preferred because they can see clearly what they have to do on certain tasks.

What topics do you think you need or want to learn more?

10 responses

speaking aja pokoknya miss. saya lemah

tentang pesawat, melayani penumpang, check in penumpang, membantu mereka di pesawat

semuanyaaa.. bhs inggris susah banget buats aya

pokoknya speaking miss. saya dikritik sama bu ari soalnya

semuanyaaa yg berhubungan dengan flight attendant miss

mmm... i don't know. saya pengen ngomong bhs inggris dengan lancar udah

mmmm... pengen natural conversation aja gitu miss

mmm... expressionssss miss. i lack of it

ingin bisa berkomunikasi dengan natural spt di film, cara berkomunikasi sama penumpang yg sopan, cara melayani mereka dan membantu mereka

Figure 2. Students' responses to question number 2

There were a lot of topics that were mentioned including greetings and leave-takings, announcements, serving food and drinks, helping and giving information to the passengers, and practicing English for the job interview. When compared with the existing syllabus and the list of company requirements, these topics are heavily related to their working environment where the spoken language is more frequently used than the written one. Students also requested to not pay very detailed attention to the use of grammar since they think it would slow them down and discourage them to try to speak. However, they wanted the book to teach them how to read words, meaning that pronunciation needs to be emphasized.

How many activities do you want in one chapter of the book?

10 responses

speaking lah pokoknya. jangan grammar. benci grammar

jangan banyak banyak tapi mendalam miss

mmm nggak tau miss. lima? enam?

yang banyaaakkk missss. mau speaking teruusss

yang banyak miss hehe... specially speaking. saya suka speaking

yang banyak sih miss. speaking terutama. saya butuh banget

smeuanya yg penting speaking miss

A LOT! specially the speaking

yang banyak miss kan buat latihan

Figure 3. Students' responses to question number 3

There were two different responses to this question. Some of the students wanted to have more than five activities in one chapter including the spoken practices such as interviewing and making posters, others want less than five activities so that they can focus more on correcting their errors and learn from them. It is understandable since there is a possibility of learning style differences between the students. However, they agreed that spoken practices have to dominate the whole activities. They believed that by having a lot of practice, their speaking skills will improve.

a. What learning activities do you like the most?

What learning activities do you like the most?

10 responses

pokoknya yang speaking miss

nonton video, listening music

mainan miss

nonton film miss sama main game

main gaaameee miiissss

nonton film misssss pleaseeee nonton film ya? ya ayayaaaaa? miss baik deh

MAIN GAME MISS!!!

mmm... games. can we do that?

game, nonton video

Figure 4. Students' responses to question number 4

Various answers obtained from the students showed that they have different learning styles. Some of them enjoy doing a long discussion about certain topics, yet some others prefer doing a group presentation. Even though they have different favorite learning activities, all of them agreed that they wanted less grammar and writing exercises and more games to be carried out in the classroom. They assumed that practicing grammar includes memorizing certain formulas. By the time they memorized all of the formulae, they would be discouraged to practice their speaking since they thought it would be more difficult than memorizing the grammar. Since the focus of their future working environment requires them to speak a lot, they thought that grammar memorization is not as essential as them being able to communicate with others using English. Moreover, three students who happened to be having some experiences working with foreigners stated that grammar is not needed when speaking English, therefore, they do not want to focus on that.

How would you like the books to look like?

10 responses

mmmm yang banyak contoh dialognya

pakai font yang jelas, terbaca, jangan ada salah ketik, agak estetik juga gapapa miss pakai font yang lucu lucu gitu hehe

wah... jangan di print gede2 miss nggak bisa masuk tas. sama cetakannya yg jelas, jilid nya yg kuat. sama jangan pakai kertas buram kaya rang miskin

yang lucuuuu. tapi jangan terlalu banyak warna sama gambar. tapi jangan banyak tulisannya jug ahahaha

yang cute. hahaha

yang ucul... jangan terlalu colorful miss kaya anak kecil

jangan yg terlalu cewek lah miss. jijik kali aku

i want them to be not too big and not to smell

Figure 5. Students' responses to question number 5

For this question, some of the students declared that they did not like pictures since it would be too childish to put pictures on the "adult" textbook. They believed that they would be able to understand a concept without having to look at the picture illustration. However, when it deals with vocabularies, pictures are needed as long as they are not cartoons or pictures for children. Furthermore, they mentioned that colorful books were too much since they study English for professional purposes. Therefore, it is expected that the textbook only consists of adequate colors, not too bright or too dark, for emphasizing important terms or concepts.

The use of the font was also the main point of the discussion. They wanted the book to be less formal but there were no proposed types of font. They would like the books to be printed with an

adequate size of the font. They also mentioned that it would be better if the book has aesthetic features in it, including the use of unique letters for the titles or headings.

CONCLUSION

Students need textbooks as one of the resources to learn the target language. The role of the textbook is vital yet commercial textbooks usually do not provide the exact materials needed. Therefore, specially-designed textbooks are needed to fulfill both, the students' needs and expectations. In deciding suitable textbooks, needs analysis must be carried out to find out what the students need to master after graduating from a certain program.

This study reviews the need analysis of the students of what they want their textbook to be. From the analysis, it can be concluded that students want a complete textbook with simple instructions so that it is easier for them to understand the topics. They also want a textbook that contains authentic materials containing more speaking practices rather than grammar or writing exercises due to its effect on speaking encouragement. Furthermore, students want to be respected as adult learners who do not need a lot of pictures and colors to help them learn.

Future studies must be conducted in a larger scale which includes more than ten students. Students' background knowledge must also be emphasized since it would make a difference in their preference. More aspects such as environmental situation, learners' personal information, and learners' language competence must be included as these factors may contribute toward the enrichment of the particular textbook.

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