
English Teaching Materials for SMK Students Majoring in Arts: Teachers' Perspectives

Siti Sudartini¹, Siwi Karmadi K², B Yuniar Diyanti³

^{1,2,3}Yogyakarta State University, Jalan Colombo No. 1, Karangmalang, Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: siti_sudartini@uny.ac.id/sudartinisiti@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The current practice of teaching English as a foreign language for students of SMK with art concentration needs to be reconsidered. These particular learners tend to be treated as having the same learning needs and target needs as those of SMA. Indeed, conducting an empirical study of the learning needs of SMK students, particularly those with art concentration is necessarily important. Regarding this fact, this piece of writing tries to figure out the learning needs of SMK students with art concentration by means of identifying the voices of those conducting the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language for these particular learners. The data presented in the study were obtained through conducting a focus group discussion involving English teachers of 9 vocational schools with art concentration in Yogyakarta Special Region and by giving a set of questionnaires to them. The discussions presented cover the topics of the availability of the materials and sources of materials, types of texts used, the language skills being discussed, the activities, and the values or norms that need to be inserted in the teaching and learning processes. The study reveals that there is not any English textbook that fits the learning needs of these particular learners, teachers are supposed to use the same book as those for the common senior high schools. Consequently they also find their own materials to fit the learners' needs from many different sources.

Keywords: English, language, students, SMK, art

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language to vocational schools or SMK students is always interesting to be discussed. Unlike students from SMA or the common senior high schools, SMK students have particular learning needs and target needs in accordance to the concentration proposed by the schools. Those graduated from this type of senior high schools are expected to have a certain additional skill to enter a particular work field, although they also can continue their study to higher education institutions like universities or colleges as SMK is considered as a kind of vocational schools in the middle level education (Djohar, 2007:376).

This particular type of learners needs to be treated differently from those of common senior high school students. Unfortunately, there is not even different content in the curriculum compared to those for all types senior high school in Indonesia. It is stated in the curriculum that the basic competencies are the same for SMA/MA and SMK/MAK. In fact, there are various types of SMK based on its concentration in Yogyakarta. Some of them are SMK with business and administration management, tourisms, computer networks, engineering, performing art, craft, and many others. Yet, there must be some efforts to improve the quality of English teaching and learning practices for SMK students by having more attention to the learners' need of each of

particular concentration. This study tries to look closer to the learners' need of SMK with art concentration covering those of performing arts and craft seen from the teachers' perspectives. This study is an initial step in developing a supplementary material for this particular SMK. The underlying reason of conducting the study is the idea that one of the efforts that can be done to fit the learners' needs is by providing additional teaching materials and activities that fit the learners' needs.

In doing so, determining the learning needs and target needs of SMK students particularly those with art concentration is necessary owing to the fact that needs analysis is very important to be done before conducting the teaching and learning process. Needs analysis is an essential part in designing an effective classroom practices. By doing so, teachers can have better plans for their syllabuses, courses, materials, and the kind of teaching and learning activities they want to have (Jordan, 1997:22). This particular study in particular tries to look closer on the currently used materials to teach English in SMK with art concentration. The discussion presented through this particular writing covers: a) the availability of materials and sources of materials, b) types of texts used, c) the language skills being discussed, d) types of learning activities, and values or norms that need to be inserted during the teaching and learning processes.

2 METHODS

This particular study is qualitative in nature. The data of the research are in the form of qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were collected through conducting the *Focus Group Discussion* and the quantitative ones were collected by distributing a set of questionnaire to 16 English teachers teaching in 9 SMK having art concentration in Yogyakarta. The chosen SMK were those having a good reputation in Yogyakarta Special Region.

As the data collected, the data analysis steps were conducted. The qualitative data were analyzed by following the steps of analyzing qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The quantitative data obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire were analyzed by using the descriptive statistics in the form of the frequency of occurrence.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following are results of the *focus group discussion* and the analysis of the questioner given to the teachers who become the subjects of this study. As mentioned earlier that the discussions of the results cover five areas namely the availability of materials and sources of the materials, types of texts, language skills taught, types of learning activities, and the necessities of inserting values and norms in English teaching and learning practices.

3.1 The availability of materials and sources of materials

The term 'materials' in this discussion refers to anything used to facilitate

language learners to learn that can be in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a video, a newspaper or any other that presents the language use (Tomlinson, 2011:xiii). The role of materials in every teaching and learning process is undeniable particularly those in the form of textbooks. Textbooks are considered as one of the important components contributing to teachers' success in handling the classroom activities in the way they can help them to define the curriculum (Altbach, 1991:1). Textbooks also provide a general outline for teachers and the main resource for students (Pratt, 1972; Britton, Woodward and Binkley, 2009).

In relation to the availability of materials, there are 12 teachers out of 16 saying that there are not any specific textbooks specifically written for SMK with art concentration and the only available textbook is the one provided by the government entitled *Bahasa Inggris untuk SMA/MA/SMK/MAK (2014)*. There are 9 teachers mention that they don't use the provided textbook but rather find another book for SMK they can get such as those provided in electronic format from the PUSKURBUK entitled *Effective Communication: An Integrated Course of English for Vocational High School* written by Agus Widyantoro, Kartika Pratiwi and Nuki Prihatini (2008) and *Communicative Builder: English for Vocational School* written by Eri Kurniawan and Arif Kurniawan (2008). All of the respondents agree that the available textbooks do not sufficiently fulfill the learners' needs. The first book is too general and the other two books are better for they are written for SMK in general but do not accommodate the ones with art concentration. The content of the books are merely for SMK with business and administration concentration and also tourism. In short, they could not find a textbook that fits their students' needs and they need to find additional materials from other sources.

The following are the results of the analysis of the questionnaire given to the teachers related to sources of materials other than textbooks they used in the classroom.

Table 1. The other sources of materials used

Point	Sources	Number of respondent	Percentage (%)
a.	Other textbooks	9	56,25
b.	Newspapers or magazines	12	75
c.	Television or Radio Broadcast	2	12,5
d.	Movies, Videos, and Songs	14	87,5
e.	Internet websites:		
f.	Pictures, photos posters, etc.	11	68,75
g.	Self made materials	8	50
h.	Exercises Books	1	6,25
i.	Others	0	0

The study found that most teachers (87, 5%) like to use movies, videos and songs as the sources and also like to find materials from internet websites. This table shows that it is not difficult to find additional materials from other sources in order to fit the learners' need and the curriculum but not all teachers have enough time and

capabilities to do that.

3.2 Types/Forms of texts

One of the demand stated in the currently used curriculum is the students have the ability to understand, identify, response and write some types of texts. Therefore, teachers need to facilitate them with various types of texts during the teaching and learning process. The main reason of doing this, is the idea that the most important step of helping students to understand different texts is by improving their awareness of the different features of each texts ad how to understand each of them (Ferrell, 2008:50). In line with the availability of textbooks for SMK with art concentration, the study also reveals the types or forms of texts used by the teachers in the teaching and learning processes. The following table presents the data from the questionnaire related to types and forms of texts used by teachers in handling the classroom.

Table 2. Types of Texts Used in the Teaching and Learning Process

Point	Types/Forms of Texts	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a.	Texts from textbooks	6	37,5
b.	Scientific Articles	2	12,5
c.	Magazine Articles	8	50
d.	Newspaper articles	9	56,25
e.	Parts of Novels	3	18,75
f.	Poetry	3	18,75
g.	Short stories	9	56,25
h.	Advertisements (magazines/ newspaper/booklet, etc)	13	81,25
i.	Articles from websites	14	87,5
j.	Videos from youtube (or other websites)	9	56,25
k.	Parts of Movies	3	18,75
l.	Song Lyrics	11	68,75
m.	Brochures/ poster/ leaflets	11	68,75
n.	Others	0	0

The table shows that texts from websites and advertisements are mostly used forms of texts used by teachers. It is followed by those of song lyrics and brochures/posters/leaflets. These results are in line with the learners' needs of current news provided in the internet and also the need to get information and the need to have the ability to make their own brochures/leaflets/leaflets related to the art products or performances.

3.3 The Language Skills

Meanwhile in terms of the language skills being taught in the classroom, all of the

teachers said that it is the four main language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that are mostly discussed in the class supported by other skills of pronunciation, vocabulary, and structure/grammar. It is similar to other teaching and learning processes conducted in SMA. The following table presents the data from the questionnaire.

Table 3. Language Skills Taught in the Classroom

Point	Skills	Number of respondents	Percentage
a.	Listening	16	100
b.	Speaking (monologue)	15	93.75
c.	Speaking (dialogue/conversation)	16	100
d.	Reading	16	100
e.	Writing	16	100
f.	Pronunciation	11	68.75
g.	Vocabulary mastery	14	87.5
h.	Structure and Grammar	16	100

3.4 Types of Learning Activities

Following Bruner (1966) in Wankel and Blessinger (2012), learning activities, not to mention in foreign language learning contexts need to be able to create excitement and strong motivation and engagement in students to learn the language. This study reveals the types of learning activities commonly conducted by teachers in teaching English to students of SMK with art concentration that are believed to be effective in maintaining the students engagements and participation in teaching and learning process.

In terms of teaching listening skills, all of the respondents say that they like to ask the students to listen to an audio material then they need to answer the questions following the audio material (100%) and listen to an audio material and complete the blank spaces provided (93,75%).

In relation to teaching the speaking skills, the teachers often ask the students to make a dialogue in groups and perform it in front of the class (93,75%) and they also like to use role plays (87,5%). They say that these two activities are very useful to improve the students' ability to speak and at the same time improve their confidence to speak in front of other people. Sometimes, they also make the students complete a dialogue and present that in front of the class and also play survey games. Some teachers say that sometimes they drill the students to pronounce some expressions related to their field of study (50%).

In terms of teaching reading skills, most of the respondents (87, 5%) said that they like to teach the students some reading comprehension skills like *getting meaning from context*, *reading for main ideas*, and *finding patterns of organization* (in identifying the generic structure of the text) by asking the students to find synonyms and find the meaning of some words based on context. Some teachers like to

ask the students to make a list of the unfamiliar words and make the summary of the text (81, 25%). Most of the teachers said that their students are mostly have poor vocabulary mastery and reluctant to read that teachers need to find ways in improving their vocabulary and reading comprehension ability.

Meanwhile, in teaching writing skills all of the teachers (100%) usually ask the students to write sentences/paragraphs based on some pictures provided or ask the students to arrange jumble sentences or paragraphs as the main activity. Some teachers (14 out of 16 or 87% of respondents) like to ask the students to complete some paragraphs/sentences or ask the students to write their experiences or make their own posters/leaflets/brochures of art products or performances based on the given situations.

In shorts, all of the respondents agree that they need to facilitate the students with materials and activities that suitable with the learners' field of study or concentration. They said that the learners need practical materials that could be much beneficial when they do their jobs after graduating from the school.

3.5 Values or Norms Inserted

The respondents of the study mentioned that similar to other foreign language learners the students of SMK with art concentration also need additional contents of materials related to cultural norms and values. They realize that it is impossible to teach a foreign language without teaching its culture for language is part of culture and also a means of organizing other cultural aspects (Foley, 2001; Sharifian and Palmer, 2007). All of them (100% of respondents) said that together with the linguistic contents they need also to teach their students values to develop the students' characters (namely the religiosity, independence, discipline, honesty, nationalism, and many other) as mentioned in the curriculum. In addition, most of them (93, 75%) agreed that it is necessary to insert the local wisdom in teaching and learning process.

4 CONCLUSIONS

There are some important points can be drawn from this study of teachers' perspectives related to the English teaching and learning materials for students of SMK with art concentration. Firstly, there is not any textbooks peculiar for students of SMK with art concentration. The available textbooks for SMK do not fit the learners' need that teachers need to find additional materials from other sources, such as newspapers, magazines, internet websites, songs and movies. Secondly, in terms of skills and forms of texts, and types of activities used in teaching and learning process this particular learners are considered as having the same needs as those of SMA students. Finally, it is suggested that there must be cultural norms, values and local wisdoms integration in the practice of teaching English as a foreign language to SMK students majoring in art owing to the fact that language is part of culture that every time someone learns a foreign language at the same time the person learn a foreign culture that might not be in accordance with his/her own cultural norms and values. Following Nieto (2010) teachers need to consider also the fact that culture is dynamic, can be learned and created as well as socially constructed.

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