



Designing Instructional Materials for First Semester English Learners from Basic to Intermediate Proficiency Based on Need Analysis

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Abstrak

Dalam dunia yang semakin mengglobal, kemampuan berbahasa Inggris menjadi hal yang esensial untuk keberhasilan akademik maupun profesional. Namun, banyak mahasiswa semester pertama Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang masih berada pada tingkat kemahiran dasar, yang menghambat kemajuan mereka menuju tingkat menengah sebagaimana dipersyaratkan oleh *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). Penelitian ini menyoroti kurangnya bahan ajar yang dirancang secara khusus untuk mendukung transisi mahasiswa dari tingkat dasar menuju tingkat menengah. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk merancang dan mengembangkan bahan ajar berdasarkan analisis kebutuhan yang komprehensif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *Research and Development* (R&D) dengan model ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, dan Evaluation). Subjek penelitian melibatkan 30 mahasiswa semester pertama, tiga dosen, dan lima alumni. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, wawancara, tes diagnostik, pretest, posttest, dan observasi kelas. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji *paired sample t-test*, sementara data kualitatif dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa menghadapi tantangan yang signifikan dalam berbicara dengan lancar, memahami input lisan dengan kecepatan alami, mengidentifikasi gagasan utama dalam membaca, serta mengorganisasikan ide dalam menulis. Bahan ajar yang dikembangkan, dengan mengintegrasikan pendekatan berbasis tugas (*task-based*) dan berbasis keterampilan (*skill-based*) yang selaras dengan deskriptor CEFR, terbukti efektif dalam menjembatani kesenjangan tersebut. Hasil posttest menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pada keempat keterampilan berbahasa, yang menegaskan peran bahan ajar dalam mendukung transisi mahasiswa menuju tingkat menengah. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pendidikan bahasa Inggris dengan menghadirkan bahan ajar yang tervalidasi secara empiris dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan nyata pembelajar. Temuan ini juga memberikan implikasi praktis bagi dosen, institusi, dan peneliti selanjutnya dalam merancang sumber belajar bahasa Inggris yang relevan dan sesuai tingkat kemampuan.

Kata Kunci: pengembangan bahan ajar, CEFR, model ADDIE, analisis kebutuhan, kemampuan bahasa Inggris

Abstract

In an increasingly globalized world, English proficiency is essential for academic and professional success. However, many first-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang remain at a basic proficiency level, which hinders their progression toward intermediate competence as required by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This research addresses the lack of tailored instructional materials that support students' transition from basic to intermediate proficiency. This study aims to design and develop instructional materials based on a comprehensive needs analysis. Employing a Research and Development (R&D) methodology with the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation), the research engaged 30

first-semester students, three lecturers, and five alumni. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, diagnostic tests, pretests, posttests, and classroom observations. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests, while qualitative data were examined thematically. The findings revealed that students faced significant challenges in speaking fluently, comprehending oral input at natural speed, identifying main ideas in reading, and organizing ideas in writing. The developed instructional materials, which integrated task-based and skill-based approaches aligned with CEFR descriptors, demonstrated effectiveness in bridging these gaps. Posttest results showed significant improvement across all four language skills, confirming the materials' role in supporting students' transition toward intermediate proficiency. This research contributes to English language education by providing empirically validated instructional materials that respond to learners' actual needs. It offers practical implications for lecturers, institutions, and future researchers in designing relevant and level-appropriate English learning resources.

Keywords: Instructional material development, CEFR, ADDIE model, needs analysis, English proficiency

Introduction

In today's globalized era, English proficiency is no longer considered an optional skill but a vital requirement for academic achievement, career advancement, and cross-cultural communication. English functions as the global lingua franca, connecting people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For students enrolled in English Education programs, mastery of the language is even more critical, as their academic and professional trajectories depend heavily on their ability to use English effectively. As Crystal (2003) emphasizes, the role of English in fostering international engagement underscores the urgent need for comprehensive support in developing strong language competencies.

Despite its importance, many students in English Education programs, including those at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, struggle to reach the expected level of proficiency. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), first-semester students are ideally expected to achieve at least an intermediate level of proficiency (A2–B1). However, preliminary assessments indicate that most remain at a basic level (A1–A2). This discrepancy limits their academic performance and hinders their readiness for professional roles where advanced communication skills are essential. The British Council (2013) highlights that

insufficient proficiency at the tertiary level directly impedes academic success and employability.

Observations and diagnostic tests conducted with first-year students reveal persistent difficulties across core language skills. Students often face challenges in speaking fluently, understanding oral input at natural speed, identifying key ideas in reading, and organizing ideas coherently in writing. As Nation and Newton (2009) point out, weaknesses at the foundational level tend to obstruct progress at more advanced stages of language acquisition. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing skill gaps early in the learning process, particularly in the first semester when students are laying the foundation for future academic success.

One of the contributing factors to this problem is the lack of instructional materials specifically designed to support students transitioning from basic to intermediate levels. Existing resources are often either too elementary or targeted at advanced learners, leaving a significant gap in instructional support. Moreover, general English textbooks frequently fail to address the practical and contextual challenges students face in their academic and professional environments. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that effective materials must be closely aligned with learners' actual needs to ensure meaningful learning outcomes.

The absence of tailored materials is compounded by the limited research focusing on learners in this transitional stage. Much of the existing literature concentrates on advanced learners or English for Specific Purposes (ESP), while the unique needs of students moving from beginner to intermediate proficiency are often overlooked (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This research seeks to fill that gap by developing instructional materials informed by a comprehensive needs analysis, ensuring they are directly relevant to the learners' contexts and goals.

This study employs the Research and Development (R&D) approach, guided by the ADDIE model—Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. Through this framework, materials are systematically designed, tested, and refined to meet the needs of first-semester students. Data were collected from multiple sources, including questionnaires, interviews, diagnostic tests, classroom observations, and pre- and post-tests. The triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the validity of the findings and ensures that the materials developed are grounded in empirical evidence.

The findings from the needs analysis highlight that students not only lack proficiency but also desire interactive and contextualized learning experiences. Many students expressed a preference for real-life communication tasks, visual learning supports, and collaborative activities such as role-plays and group discussions. These preferences align with task-based and skill-based approaches, which emphasize meaningful language use and integrated skill development. Richards (2006) further supports that materials designed with real-world applications promote more effective and motivating learning outcomes.

Ultimately, this research aims to design and develop instructional materials that effectively bridge the gap between basic and intermediate proficiency among first-semester English learners. By aligning the materials with CEFR descriptors and student needs, the study seeks to provide practical solutions for enhancing language proficiency. The significance of this study extends beyond

the immediate classroom context, offering valuable implications for lecturers, curriculum developers, and institutions committed to improving English language education. It also contributes to the growing body of research on instructional design, demonstrating how data-driven approaches can produce materials that are both pedagogically sound and practically relevant.

Method

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach to design instructional materials for first-semester English learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. The R&D method was chosen because it allows for the systematic creation, testing, and refinement of educational products that directly address learners' needs. In particular, the study followed the ADDIE model—Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation—which provides a structured framework for instructional design. Each stage of the model was adapted to ensure that the materials effectively facilitated the learners' transition from basic to intermediate proficiency.

The first stage, Analysis, involved identifying the students' current proficiency levels, challenges, and needs. Data were gathered through diagnostic tests aligned with the CEFR, questionnaires, interviews with lecturers and alumni, and classroom observations. This step provided a comprehensive understanding of the students' necessities, lacks, and wants, following Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) model. The results showed that most students were at A1–A2 levels and faced particular difficulties in speaking, listening comprehension, and academic reading. These findings established the foundation for designing relevant instructional materials.

The second stage, Design, focused on outlining the instructional goals, learning outcomes, and content organization. Based on the needs analysis, the materials were planned to integrate task-based and skill-based approaches, ensuring balanced development of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Each unit was mapped to CEFR descriptors, with clear objectives that moved students progressively toward B1 proficiency. Additionally, the design stage incorporated communicative and contextualized tasks, such as role-plays, group discussions, and academic writing practice, to make the learning process both meaningful and engaging.

The third stage, Development, involved creating the actual instructional materials based on the design plan. The materials consisted of modules, worksheets, and interactive tasks that emphasized practical language use. At this stage, expert validation was conducted by three lecturers from the English Education program, who reviewed the materials for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with CEFR standards. Feedback from these experts was used to revise and refine the materials before piloting them with students.

The fourth stage, Implementation, tested the developed materials in a real classroom setting. A pilot study was conducted with 30 first-semester students, who engaged with the materials over a series of lessons. During implementation, the researcher observed classroom interactions and collected feedback from both students and lecturers regarding the usability and effectiveness of the materials. This phase ensured that the resources were not only theoretically sound but also practical and adaptable in authentic teaching contexts.

The fifth stage, Evaluation, assessed the effectiveness of the instructional materials in improving students' language proficiency. Both formative and summative evaluations were conducted. Formative evaluation occurred throughout the teaching process, using observation checklists and student feedback forms. Summative evaluation involved pretests and posttests measuring students' performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests to determine whether significant improvement occurred. Qualitative data, including student reflections and lecturer comments, were analyzed thematically to

provide deeper insights into the learning process.

The participants of this study included 30 first-semester students, three lecturers, and five alumni from the English Education program. The students were selected purposively, as they represented the target population of learners transitioning from basic to intermediate proficiency. The lecturers provided expert validation and pedagogical insights, while the alumni contributed perspectives on the relevance of English skills in academic and professional contexts. This triangulation of participants strengthened the validity of the needs analysis and the instructional design.

In summary, the methodology ensured that the development of instructional materials was data-driven, systematically structured, and empirically tested. The ADDIE model provided a comprehensive framework that guided each phase of the research, from identifying student needs to evaluating the effectiveness of the materials. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study not only demonstrated measurable improvement in students' proficiency but also highlighted practical strategies for designing relevant and engaging materials. This methodological approach ensures that the findings and products of this research are both academically rigorous and pedagogically valuable.

Result and Discussion

The results of this study are presented according to the sequence of the ADDIE model, beginning with the analysis phase and concluding with the evaluation phase. Each phase highlights the data collected, the insights gained, and the contributions made toward the development of instructional materials for first-semester English learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang.

In the Analysis phase, the diagnostic CEFR-based test revealed that most students were still at the A1–A2 level across all four language skills. Only a small proportion had reached B1 proficiency. Speaking was

identified as the weakest skill, with 85% of students reporting difficulties in fluency, vocabulary recall, and confidence. Listening comprehension also posed significant challenges, particularly with authentic speech and varied accents. Reading and writing, while slightly stronger, still showed notable gaps in identifying main ideas and organizing written texts.

The needs analysis questionnaire provided additional insights. Students emphasized their necessities in academic contexts, such as classroom presentations (90%), academic reading (90%), and participation in discussions (90%). They also identified oral communication for future teaching practice as essential (80%). In terms of lacks, speaking was again the dominant challenge (85%), followed by reading (70%), listening (60%), and writing (50%). Students' wants revealed preferences for interactive activities (76%), real-life communication contexts (87%), and relevant topics such as education, travel, and youth-related issues (67%).

In the Design phase, instructional objectives were mapped to CEFR descriptors. The syllabus was developed using a combination of task-based and skill-based approaches, with each unit designed to progressively build students' competencies. For instance, early units focused on basic conversational strategies, while later units incorporated academic tasks such as delivering presentations and writing short essays. Expert validation from lecturers confirmed that the design was pedagogically sound and aligned with the learners' needs.

The Development phase resulted in the creation of instructional materials that included modules, task sheets, and interactive activities. The materials were revised after validation to ensure clarity, practicality, and alignment with CEFR standards. Feedback highlighted the importance of integrating visual aids and interactive group work, both of which were incorporated into the final version.

During the Implementation phase, the materials were piloted with 30 students in the classroom. Observations showed increased student engagement, particularly during group discussions and role-plays. Students demonstrated greater willingness to

participate actively compared to earlier sessions, indicating that the contextualized and interactive nature of the materials motivated them to use English more confidently.

In the Evaluation phase, the effectiveness of the instructional materials was assessed using pretests and posttests across the four language skills. The results indicated significant improvement in students' proficiency levels. Table 1 presents the comparison between pretest and posttest scores.

Table 1. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results Across Four Skills

Language Skill	Pretest Mean Score	Posttest Mean Score	Improvement	Significance (p-value)
Listening	2.3	1.8	+19.5	1 (p < 0.05)
Speaking	8.7	4.2	+25.5	0 (p < 0.05)
Reading	5.1	2.5	+17.4	2 (p < 0.05)
Writing	4.6	0.9	+16.3	3 (p < 0.05)

The results show significant improvements across all four skills, with speaking showing the highest increase (+25.5 points). This reflects the impact of task-based and interactive activities integrated into the instructional materials.

Overall, the findings confirmed that the developed instructional materials effectively bridged the gap between basic and intermediate proficiency. The improvements demonstrated not only the validity of the ADDIE model in instructional design but also the relevance of needs-based materials in motivating and supporting learners.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the critical importance of designing instructional materials based on comprehensive needs analysis. The pretest results confirmed earlier observations that most students were still functioning at the basic level (A1–A2), particularly in speaking and listening. This aligns with Nation and Newton's (2009) assertion that weaknesses at the foundational level often hinder further language development. Addressing these gaps early in the learning process is therefore essential.

The posttest results demonstrated significant improvement across all four skills, particularly in speaking. This finding

supports Richards' (2006) argument that materials emphasizing real-world applications yield more meaningful learning outcomes. By integrating task-based and skill-based approaches, the instructional materials created in this study provided students with practical opportunities to use language in authentic contexts, thereby enhancing their fluency and confidence.

The improvement in listening comprehension suggests that exposure to varied input, including natural-speed recordings and different accents, helped students develop stronger auditory processing skills. This aligns with the CEFR descriptors, which emphasize that learners transitioning from A2 to B1 should be able to understand the main points of clear speech in familiar contexts. The integration of audio-based tasks was therefore crucial in promoting listening proficiency.

In reading, the results showed that students improved in identifying main ideas and making inferences. This is consistent with Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), who emphasize the importance of aligning reading tasks with academic needs. The use of authentic texts and comprehension exercises helped students gradually build the skills necessary to handle more complex academic material.

Writing also showed measurable improvement, particularly in students' ability to organize ideas coherently. This can be attributed to the scaffolded writing tasks provided in the modules, which emphasized paragraph structure, cohesion, and academic vocabulary. According to Nation (2001), systematic practice in writing is vital for learners to progress toward higher proficiency levels. The materials' focus on practical writing tasks thus proved effective.

The significance of these findings lies not only in measurable proficiency gains but also in increased student motivation and engagement. The results of classroom observations and feedback revealed that students preferred interactive, real-life activities over traditional grammar-based instruction. This supports Tomlinson's (2011) view that learner-centered materials increase motivation and foster deeper engagement with language learning.

From a broader perspective, this research addresses the gap in instructional material development for learners transitioning from basic to intermediate proficiency. Previous studies have largely focused on advanced learners or English for Specific Purposes (ESP), while this research demonstrates the necessity of tailored resources at earlier stages. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) point out, innovation is required to meet the needs of diverse learner populations, particularly in general English contexts.

Finally, the study reinforces the value of the ADDIE model as a systematic approach to instructional design. Each phase—analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation—contributed to ensuring that the final product was both theoretically grounded and practically effective. This confirms Dick and Carey's (2005) claim that structured design models enhance the quality and relevance of instructional materials. The success of this study suggests that similar approaches can be replicated in other educational contexts to support learners' language development.

Conclusion

This study set out to design and develop instructional materials that support first-semester English learners at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang in transitioning from basic to intermediate proficiency. Guided by the ADDIE model and informed by a comprehensive needs analysis, the research produced materials that addressed the learners' necessities, lacks, and wants. The findings revealed that students faced significant challenges in speaking fluently, comprehending oral input, and organizing ideas in writing, while also expressing strong preferences for interactive, contextualized, and engaging learning experiences.

The implementation and evaluation phases demonstrated that the developed instructional materials effectively improved students' proficiency across all four language skills, with speaking showing the greatest gains. Quantitative data from pretests and posttests confirmed statistically significant

improvements, while qualitative feedback indicated higher motivation and confidence among learners. These results highlight the value of needs-based, task-oriented, and skill-focused materials in fostering meaningful language learning outcomes.

Overall, this research contributes to English language education by providing empirically validated instructional materials that bridge the gap between basic and intermediate proficiency. It offers practical implications for lecturers and curriculum developers in designing relevant and engaging resources tailored to learners' actual needs. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of systematic instructional design models such as ADDIE in ensuring the effectiveness of educational innovations. Future research may expand on this work by applying the developed materials to larger populations, different contexts, or integrating digital learning technologies to further enhance language acquisition.

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