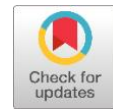


# Developing ESP learning materials for airport ground handling services students: A needs analysis

Herida Panji Olivia Azhar <sup>a,1,\*</sup>, Anita Nur Masyi'ah <sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a, b</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Teknologi Kedirgantaraan, Bantul, DIY, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup> [herida.panji@sttkd.ac.id](mailto:herida.panji@sttkd.ac.id) \*; <sup>2</sup> [anita.nur@sttkd.ac.id](mailto:anita.nur@sttkd.ac.id)



## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received 17 June 2023

Revised 29 July 2023

Accepted 8 August 2023

### Keywords

ESP

Ground handling

Needs analysis

## ABSTRACT

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a pivotal role in enhancing the communicative competence of students preparing for careers. In order to develop the ESP learning materials for ground handling students, this study focuses on the needs analysis. The needs analysis will capture two aspects: 1) The participants' perspectives on the development of ESP learning materials 2) the use of the English language by the airport ground handling crews. A mixed-method design was employed, incorporating surveys and interviews. The 397 participants involved students, instructors, and airport ground crews. Descriptive statistics were used to unveil the trends in the findings, and simultaneously, data reduction, data display, and drawing verification were used to delve into the participants' perspectives. The validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire were tested, and member checking was used to justify the credibility of the qualitative findings. The findings provide valuable input for the development of ESP learning materials that are contextually relevant and aligned with the needs of airport ground handling services students.



This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



**How to Cite:** Azhar, H.P.O and Masyi'ah, A.N. (2023). Developing ESP learning materials for airport ground handling students: A needs analysis. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 6(2), 95-108 <https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v6i2.9111>

## 1. Introduction

Thousands of people passing through airports every day, and behind the process, there is an intricate network of professionals working to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the flights. One critical aspect of this operation is effective communication, which is essential for coordination. The standard language for communication in the aviation community is English. This is in line with ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) language proficiency guidelines (ICAO, 2009). According to the guidelines, the use of English is mandatory for communication between pilots and air traffic controllers in the flight operation. Other professions, such as cabin crews, mechanics, ground crews, and aviation security officers have less strict standards that vary according to company regulations.

While ICAO may not mandate English proficiency for ground handling services, its importance cannot be overstated. Language skills are crucial for effective communication in ground handling services, especially in international airports (Cunningham & King, 2021). Muecklich et al. (2023) point out that miscommunication by ground crew in the airport operation can lead to incidents, although they do not cause death. However, they pose the airport operation to safety risks. Furthermore, Oreschko et al. (2011) emphasized that English mastery is one of the basic skills for ground handling crews. The ground crews also handle international passengers in the departure and arrival sections. According to the IATA (International Air Transport Association) Ground Operation

Manuals (2021), ground handling encompasses positions such as passenger handling, baggage handling, and aircraft servicing. Therefore, being able to communicate in English is a part of the daily job description of these crews.

Due to the importance of English language proficiency for ground handling crews, it is important to provide proper English training for the ground handling students. In Indonesian higher education, the status of English language teaching is considered ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The students learn English for academic purposes or vocational Purposes, depending on the nature of the study programs. ESP aims at developing students' communicative competence for professional settings. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that, in theory, there is no difference between ESP and general English teaching. However, there is '*a great deal*' of difference in practice. In general English, the learning objectives are based on linguistic analyses. On the other hand, in ESP courses, the learning objectives are based on needs analyses.

Woodrow (2018) describes the '*typical characteristics*' of ESP and highlights that the learners and the learning purposes are what make ESP unique. ESP learners are commonly adults who already have some basic English mastery and have basic knowledge of their professional fields. Then, their learning goals are to obtain communicative competence to perform in their professional context. This implies that the needs analysis process is important in developing an ESP course. The result of the needs analysis is the basis to determine the learning goals and to consider the most appropriate method to teach the materials.

Numerous studies have highlighted challenges in implementing ESP courses in higher education. Adi and Khotimah (2018) noted that faculty policies mandate ESP instructors to focus on preparing students for the English Proficiency Test at the University Language Center. This makes the instructors teach English for test preparation instead of actual practical communication skills. Moreover, at the institutional level, ESP courses are often conducted in large classes with inadequate teaching resources and insufficient faculty support. Gestanti et al. (2019) outline that such a situation makes the students exhibit low English proficiency levels, lack motivation, and tend to be passive learners.

This situation also happens in STTKD (Sekolah Tinggi Teknologi Kedirgantaraan). The students of ground handling and airport operation concentration in the Air Transport Department show a low proficiency level. The report from the STTKD Language Center for 2021-2023 shows that the students' English skills are relatively low. Less than 40% of the students pass the minimum test score set by the faculty. The test consists of listening, reading, and writing using the EnglishScore provided by the British Council. In addition to that, reports from the public relation and partnership division show that the stakeholders (airline and ground handling companies) reported that many students showed low English proficiency during on-the-job training.

Considering the importance of the English language in the airport ground operation, it is important to provide the department with quality learning materials geared to the students' learning needs. As Madya (2002) suggests, the availability of high-quality learning materials and authentic materials is among the '*standards*' that contribute to the success of a language learning program. Well-designed learning materials help learners develop their language skills while also fostering learner engagement and motivation (Richards & Rodgers, 2010; Tomlinson, 2011). Thus, the availability of ESP learning materials for ground handling services students is expected to improve the quality of the teaching and learning processes. Eventually, this improves the students' English proficiency levels. Furthermore, Woodrow (2018) states the importance of needs analysis in the development of successful ESP courses. The needs analysis makes the teaching and learning goals grounded in the target language used in professional settings. Therefore, the students in the classroom learn English not only through practicing structures and vocabulary but also through using them in meaningful contexts.

In the ESP material for ground handling service students, Cutting (2012) has the most cited publication. He uses structural-functional analysis to identify the conversation used by ground crews. The result provides valuable insight into the functions used by the ground-handling crews. However, it is important to recognize that the findings of this study primarily focus on language analysis within the classroom context rather than representing the perspectives and experiences of the ground crews themselves. To develop ESP materials that truly meet the needs of airport ground handling students, it is essential to complement this linguistic analysis with a comprehensive understanding as perceived by the ground crews themselves.

Cahyani and Drajadi (2017) explore communication problems and needs from a social engagement perspective. This offers valuable insights into the dynamics of communication within the context of airport ground handling. However, the study did not involve stakeholders from educational institutions, such as students, teachers, and campus management. Anthony (2018) states that each participant group should be invited to the needs analysis to ensure that the material development receives aid, resource allocation, and infrastructure support from the campus.

Other attempts to improve English language teaching in aviation settings involve the development of ESP textbooks for pilots and air traffic controllers (Ellis & Gerighty, 2008; Emery & Roberts, 2010; Goodman, 2008; Shawcross, 2011) and English for flight attendants (Gerighty & Davis, 2011; Lansford & Ellis, 2010). The ESP materials for ground handling sectors seem to be under-researched. Considering this issue, this study attempts to develop ESP learning materials for ground handling students.

To achieve this goal, this study uses the ESP course design proposed by Anthony (2018). The steps involve identifying needs, developing objectives, designing the materials, and evaluating the materials. Due to the time limitation, this study focuses its objectives on the first step of Anthony's model, identifying needs. Anthony further states that identification of learning needs should explore the learners, lecturers, administrators, and people working in this field. With this in mind, this study focuses on identifying the participants' perceptions on the development of ESP learning materials and the use of the English language in airport ground handling services.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research design

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design (Creswell & Clark, 2018), utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. The advantage of using this design is that it does not matter which data has more weight. The goal is to get a broader understanding on the needs analysis. In addition to that, the design can be conducted in a relatively short time since the process of data collection follows similar timeline.

### 2.2. Research participants

The population involved students, English teachers, faculty members and administration, and ground crews at an international airport in Indonesia. To conduct the quantitative procedure, a census sampling technique was used since the number of the participants was relatively small. This means that all participants in the population were invited to join the study (Table 1).

Table 1. Research Participants

| Groups            | Population       | Sample           | Interview       |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Students          | 116 students     | 116 students     | 10 students     |
| English lecturers | 4 lecturers      | 4 lecturers      | 4 lecturers     |
| Faculty members   | 5 people         | 5 people         | 5 people        |
| Ground crews      | 272 people       | 272 people       | 10 people       |
| Total             | 397 participants | 397 participants | 29 participants |

To carry out the qualitative procedure, the participants were selected purposefully from the population groups. The parties invited for the interviews were 10 students, 4 English teachers in the college, 5 faculty members (head of the department, curriculum development coordinator, and three subject teachers), and 10 ground crews. The number of participants invited for the interviews are 29 people.

### 2.3. Data collection techniques

#### 1) Questionnaire

To collect the stakeholders' perspectives and the practical use of the English language by ground handling crews, questionnaires were distributed to the participants. The questionnaire was developed using Anthony's (2018) guidelines for conducting the needs analysis. The first step in developing the

questionnaire involved making the rubric. Table 2 shows the rubric of the questionnaire that breaks down the needs analysis into indicators. Then, the researchers developed the items for the questionnaire. Once the items were completed, the questionnaire was checked for double-barreled and confusing items. After that, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 people to be tested for validity and reliability.

Table 2. Rubrics of the Questionnaires

| Variable       | Sub Variables                                      | Indicators          |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Needs analysis | Perceived needs                                    | Needs, lacks, wants |
|                | The use of English in the ground handling peration | Skills              |

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested using Pearson correlation and Alpha Cronbach. The tests were to find evidence that the instrument measures what it tries to measure (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Table 3 shows the result of the validity testing, and Table 4 presents the result of the reliability testing. Of the 22 items tested using Pearson correlation, one item was not valid. Thus, the item was removed from the questionnaire. The valid items were used in the final draft of the questionnaire and distributed to the participants to obtain the research data. The outcomes of the reliability test indicate that the instrument used in this study can be deemed reliable.

Table 3. The Result of the validity analysis

| Items | Correlation |   | Pearson R | Status    |
|-------|-------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| 1     | 0.408       | > | 0.374     | Valid     |
| 2     | 0.505       | > |           | Valid     |
| 3     | 0.478       | > |           | Valid     |
| 4     | 0.556       | > |           | Valid     |
| 5     | 0.429       | > |           | Valid     |
| 6     | 0.501       | > |           | Valid     |
| 7     | 0.553       | > |           | Valid     |
| 8     | 0.564       | > |           | Valid     |
| 9     | 0.380       | > |           | Valid     |
| 10    | 0.786       | > |           | Valid     |
| 11    | 0.644       | > |           | Valid     |
| 12    | 0.538       | > |           | Valid     |
| 13    | 0.478       | > |           | Valid     |
| 14    | 0.398       | > |           | Valid     |
| 15    | 0.414       | > |           | Valid     |
| 16    | 0.600       | > |           | Valid     |
| 17    | 0.390       | > |           | Valid     |
| 18    | 0.550       | > |           | Valid     |
| 19    | 0.491       | > |           | Valid     |
| 20    | 0.397       | > |           | Valid     |
| 21    | 0.276       | < |           | Not Valid |
| 22    | 0.452       | > |           | Valid     |

Table 4. Reliability Analysis

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|------------------|--|------------|
| .964             | .964   | 23         |

## 2) Interview

To collect the quantitative data, interviews were conducted with purposively selected participants. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed participants to provide more detailed information

about their perceptions. The interview with the students was conducted with five students at a time. This was employed to reduce their anxiety when having a face-to-face interview with the researchers. Then, for other participants, the interview was conducted individually. The rubrics of the interview guideline follow a similar pattern to the rubrics for the questionnaire. The researchers only change the statements into open-ended WH questions.

Creswell and Clark (2018) state that the trustworthiness of the findings refers to the credibility and dependability of the results obtained from the qualitative procedure. Since it involves subjective interpretation and understanding of the phenomena, assessing trustworthiness is important. Credibility assesses whether the interpretations, conclusions, and claims made by the researchers are well-grounded in the data. This was established through member checking by sharing the findings with participants to refine interpretations. Then, dependability was ensured by specifying the participants who represent a broad range of groups.

#### 2.4. Data analysis techniques

The data collected from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews will be analyzed using the qualitative data analysis model from Miles et al. (2018). This analysis is intended to identify themes and patterns related to perceptions towards the development of ESP learning materials. The analysis involved data reduction, data display, and drawing verification. The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses were integrated to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. New challenge to student engagement

This study invited stakeholders in the ground handling sector, including students, ESP teachers, faculty members, and ground handling staffs from an international airport in Indonesia. Of all the questionnaires distributed, 76% (301) were completed. 96 (24%) questionnaires were not returned, so they were omitted from the data analysis. Despite this, the data were sufficient for analysis, as Creswell and Clark (2018) state that the completion rate of a survey is at least above 50% of the target audience. Table 5 shows the composition of the respondents and the completion rate of the respective groups.

Table 5. Distributed questionnaires

| Category                                 | Sample                  | Returned         |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| Ground handling students                 | 116 students            | 92 (86%)         |
| English lecturers                        | 4 lecturers             | 4 (100%)         |
| Faculty members and administrators       | 5 people                | 5 (100%)         |
| Ground crews at an international airport | 272 crews               | 200 (73%)        |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>397 participants</b> | <b>301 (76%)</b> |

Following the distribution of the questionnaire, follow-up interviews were carried out with 29 participants. The interviews served as a vital component of the study, allowing the researcher to gain deeper insights into the perspectives of these individuals. The interviews involved five participants from an aviation college in Yogyakarta. They are the heads of the departments, the coordinator of curriculum development, and three subject teachers in ground handling. Then, four ESP teachers and ten ground crews were invited to the interviews. Finally, ten students from the department were invited to give follow-up interviews.

In this section, the findings will be presented and discussed, with a focus on answering the research questions. First, the findings and discussion cover the participants' perceptions of their needs, lacks, and wants in relation to the development of ESP learning materials for ground handling students. Second, this part focuses on the practical application of the English language by individuals working in the ground handling company. By discussing these aspects, this study is expected to inform the creation of ESP materials.

### 3.2 Perception on the needs to develop ESP learning materials for ground handling students

Table 6 suggests that nearly half (49.5%) of the respondents agree that airport ground handling crews need English at work. A smaller percentage (30.2%) strongly agree with this statement, while a combined 20.3% (3.7% strongly disagree and 16.6% disagree) expressed some level of disagreement. The data indicates that the respondents generally see the importance of English language skills for airport ground handling crews, with a particularly strong consensus on the importance of English in item 1. However, in Statement 2, there is a notable percentage of respondents who expressed some level of disagreement regarding the necessity of English at work for these crews.

Table 6. The needs of the English skills at work

| No | Items   | SD   | D     | A     | SA    |
|----|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1  | English is important for airport ground handling crews. | 5.6% | 2.3%  | 16.9% | 75.1% |
| 2  | The crews need English at work.                         | 3.7% | 16.6% | 49.5% | 30.2% |

The interview responses from the participants support the results by emphasizing that English language proficiency is an integral part of service excellence. Indonesia is popular as a tourist destination, which means that international airports are likely to have foreign passengers. The participants recognize that effective communication in English is a fundamental component for providing service excellent to passengers. They also said that foreign language skills are important in the travel and tourism industry. Thus, the skills are not just valuable for ground handling crews but a key competency in the larger industry landscape.

This aligns with the broader understanding that effective communication is a cornerstone of excellent customer service in any industry (Solomon et al., 2019). Other studies have consistently highlighted the critical role that language proficiency plays in this context. For instance, Muecklich et al. (2023) demonstrated through their research that language-related incidents, although they are not related to life-and-death incidents, can lead to safety and security risks. Furthermore, Oreschko et al. (2011) emphasized that proficiency in English is among the standard skills for ground handling crews (Table 7).

Table 7. The indicator of the needs of the English skills at work

| No | Item  | SD   | D     | A     | SA    |
|----|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 3  | English is important for ground crews job promotion | 3.7% | 20.9% | 32.6% | 42.9% |

Item 3 relates to job promotion, and it also underscores the significance of English skills, with a notable percentage of the respondents expressing agreement. The interpretation remains coherent with the idea that English proficiency is considered important for various aspects of ground crews' work, including job promotion. The result of the interviews also shows that English is important for job promotion. Ground crews are at operator-level jobs and they may advance their careers at managerial levels. In such scenarios, a good command of English can be an important factor in securing promotions. (Ting et al., 2017) point out that candidates with English skills are preferred by employers when working for a company with international customers.

Table 8. The needs on specific materials

| No | Items   | SD   | D     | A     | SA    |
|----|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4  | English for ground handling has different content from general English.   | 2.3% | 18.6% | 33.2% | 45.8% |
| 5  | English learning materials for ground handling needs further development. | 5.3% | 6.0%  | 24.3% | 64.5% |

The next aspect is related to the needs of specific learning materials for ground-handling students. Table 8 suggests that a majority of respondents (45.8%) strongly agree that English for ground handling has different content from general English. Additionally, 33.2% of the respondents agree with this statement, indicating a significant consensus. Item 5 addresses the need for further development of the English learning materials specific to ground handling. This suggests that there

may be room for improvement in the resources available (Table 9). The needs for authentic learning materials.

Table 9. The needs for authentic materials

| No | Items   | SD   | D    | A     | SA    |
|----|---|------|------|-------|-------|
| 6  | English learning materials for ground handling should be relevant to the real usage of English at work. | 5.0% | 9.3% | 30.6% | 55.1% |
| 7  | Such learning materials prepares students better in using English at work.                              | 5.0% | 3.7% | 35.9% | 55.5% |

In table 9, a majority (55.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that the English learning materials for ground handling should be relevant to the real usage of English at work. Additionally, 30.6% of respondents agree with this statement, indicating a strong consensus on the importance of authentic learning materials. Then, 55.5% of respondents strongly agree that learning materials tailored to ground handling better prepare students for using English at work.

Items 6 and 7 emphasize the importance of authentic learning materials. Respondents strongly support the idea that such materials are crucial for effective language learning. This aligns with the overall theme of tailoring English language skills to the specific needs of ground handling crews. Authentic materials have long been recognized as valuable tools for language learners (Iucu & Marin, 2014). According to Richards & Rodgers (2010), authentic materials reflect the way language is used in real-world contexts. Utilizing authentic materials helps learners develop skills that are directly transferable to their practical, everyday needs.

The result of the interview aligns with the data from items 6 and 7. Three themes emerge from the interview about the authentic materials. First, authentic materials are relevant and practical. It is relevant because the materials bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life application. It is practical since the language skills taught in the classroom are directly applicable to their daily work. Second, it is efficient. The participants believed that focusing on job-specific language makes the training more efficient and effective. They state that ground handling students can benefit from language materials and training modules that address the common situations, terminology, and challenges they encounter in their roles. Third, it is cost-efficient. By focusing on what is actually needed on the job, resources for language training can be allocated more efficiently. It ensures that investments in language training yield a clearer return.

However, Huong (2020) warns that, when using authentic materials, English teachers should focus on the pedagogical purposes of the materials. This is to ensure that the language training achieves the desired goals. In the same manner, Fitria (2022) suggests that English teachers need to consider the students' language proficiency level. Some authentic materials can be adapted, so long as they help students achieve communicative competence. In this sense, English teachers need to remember that the students are learning plain English to communicate in aviation settings. They are not learning the content of aviation subjects.

Table 10. Availability and accessibility of the ESP learning materials for ground handling students

| No | Items  | SD    | D     | A     | SA    |
|----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 8  | English for ground handling textbooks is widely available.                   | 10.3% | 28.9% | 34.6% | 26.2% |
| 9  | Online resources of English for ground handling are widely available.        | 5.6%  | 14.3% | 50.8% | 29.2% |
| 10 | It is difficult to access resources of English for ground handling.          | 8.3%  | 20.6% | 54.5% | 16.6% |
| 11 | I feel satisfied with the existing resources on English for ground handling. | 20.3% | 25.9% | 36.9% | 16.9% |

Table 10 describes the results of the availability and accessibility of the ESP learning materials. Approximately 63.5% of respondents agree (A and SA) that English textbooks for ground handling are widely available, while about 39.2% of the participants disagree (D and SD). This suggests a

generally positive perception of the availability of textbooks. A similar trend is found in the availability of online resources for the ESP materials for ground handling students. There is a general agreement that both online and printed ESP learning materials are available.

However, there is a mixed perception related to the ease of access to those materials, with a notable portion experiencing difficulty in accessing these resources. A total of 71.1% of the respondents (agree and strongly agree) perceived that accessing English resources for ground handling can be challenging. Then, although around half of the respondents feel satisfied with the existing resources, 46.2% of them express the opposite. This indicates room for improvement in meeting the satisfaction levels of the participants with the current resources.

The dissatisfaction might be related to meeting the specific language skills needed by ground crews. Adi and Khotimah (2018) reported similar findings. On the institutional level, ESP courses are held in large classes, and they lack faculty support. Their study found that the policy of the faculty makes the ESP instructors teach the students to pass the Proficiency Test. This made the instructors teach English for test preparation instead of teaching the language skills necessary for work.

The result of the interview also supports the quantitative data. In general, the English teachers state that there are already a few textbooks about English for aviation. However, they believed that there was still a lot of room for development. They illustrate how they use separate sources and self-made learning materials. For example, for teaching grammar, they use separate English grammar books, like "English Grammar in Use" (Murphy & Klett, 2019). Then, they also use textbooks from other sources to address the different language skills. The current ESP learning materials used for ground handling students are predominantly self-generated. These resources primarily take the form of PowerPoint presentations and worksheets.

The English teachers also mention some books like "English for Airline Professionals" (Leo, 2017) and "General English for Aviation" (Uemura, 2014) that are tailored to the specific needs of their ground handling students. However, they also pointed out that using these books in the classroom necessitates a substantial amount of adaptation. In fact, they indicated that the level of effort required to adapt and create supplementary materials is nearly equivalent to the effort required to develop materials from scratch.

The next aspect delves into the participants' perspective on the preferred classroom activities for English for ground handling students. It seeks to understand whether the respondents are in agreement with specific classroom activities. By examining their level of agreement with activities such as pair-work, students' presentations, role play/simulation, and group discussions, the researcher gains valuable insights into their preferences and expectations regarding the teaching methods used.

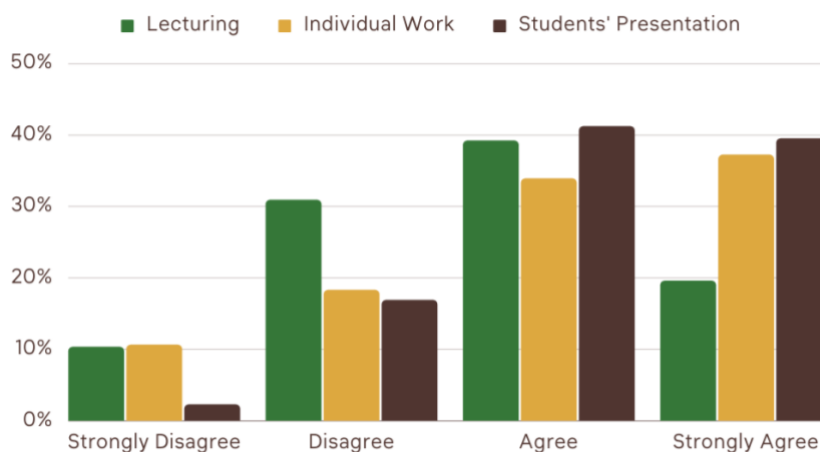


Fig. 1. Preferred learning activities; Individual

Overall, it seems that lecturing has mixed perceptions, with a substantial portion of respondents both agreeing and disagreeing with it. Figure 1 suggests that a significant percentage of the respondents (41.2%) (A and SA) perceived that lecturing is an effective teaching method. However, there is also a substantial portion (41.2%) (SD and D) that



disagrees with the effectiveness of traditional lecturing. Student presentations and individual works are generally viewed positively, with a majority of the respondents describing them as effective in the learning process.

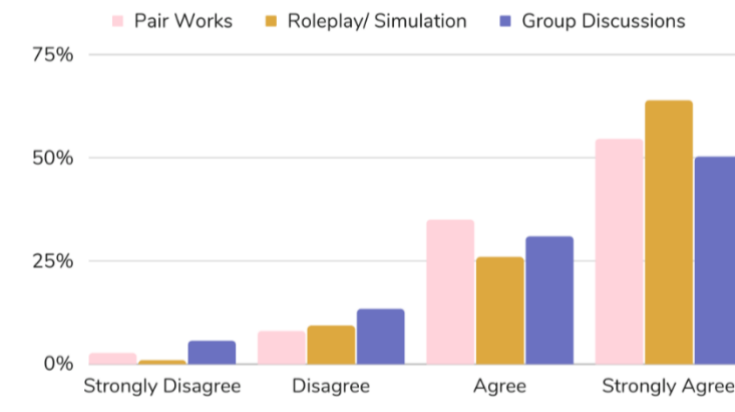


Fig. 2. Preferred learning activities; Pair/groups

On the other hand, role play/simulation, pair-work, and discussions seem to have more positive responses (Figure 2). The majority of the respondents strongly agree with its effectiveness. Pair-works receive strong support from respondents; 89.4% of them choose strongly agree and agree. Only a small minority (10.7%) of them prefer to strongly disagree or disagree. It can be interpreted that the high level of agreement in activities like role play, simulation, and pair-work suggests that students are keen on interactive and practical activities in language learning.

This preference aligns with the existing research, which underscores the effectiveness of communicative activities in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Ali et al. (2019) This aligns with the present study's findings, which indicate that the participants perceived speaking skills as important skills for ground handling crews. Correspondingly, Liu and Wang (2023) state similar findings. In their survey, they found out that one of the strategies to reduce anxiety in the EFL classroom is to increase activities like role play and group work.

The interviews revealed a valuable suggestion from the head of the department. He suggested a collaboration between English teachers and subject-specific instructors. This collaboration integrates language learning with the practical knowledge required for their field. From a different point of view, the teachers believed that they had done their best within the existing limitations. They acknowledge the need for improvement and maintain a belief in the potential for positive change. They wanted the backing and support of the campus management so that they could improve the English teaching and learning quality for the students.

### 3.2. The practical use of English language by the ground handling crews

The second part of the findings and discussion focuses on the practical use of English in an airport ground operation. The questionnaire is used to find out whether all four skills are used in an airport ground operation. Then, follow-up interviews were conducted to find out the practical use of each language skill. Overall, the participants agree that all four skills are necessary for ground handling crews, with an emphasis on speaking skills. Figure 3 shows that 87.4% of the participants reported using speaking skills in their work. Only a small percentage (12.6%, SD and D) express disagreement about using speaking skills. This suggests that speaking skills are not only important but are actively employed in their daily tasks.

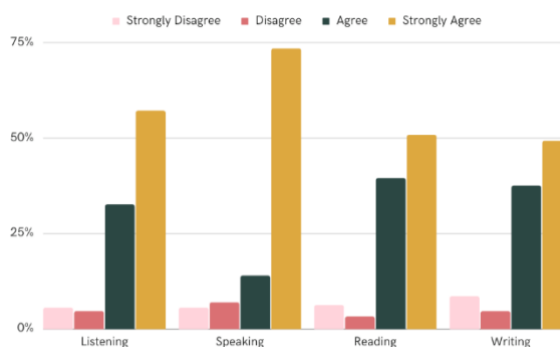


Fig. 3. Skills are necessary for ground handling crews

In the follow-up interviews, the participants reported the practical use of English within the airport ground operation. English serves as a means of communication with foreign passengers and foreign airline crews. Beyond passenger and crew interactions, English language proficiency is used for comprehending aviation manuals and ground operation technical terms.

#### 1) Communication with foreign passengers

The interview reveals that a number of positions provide occasional service to foreign passengers. The positions include check-in counter, passenger service assistant, gate service, information desk, and lost and found unit. In their respective capacities, the crews engage with foreign passengers, offering assistance, information, and support. For the ground crew at the check-in counter, some practical uses of the English language were identified from the interviews. These functions include greetings, asking for travel documents, explaining baggage allowance, explaining additional services and special requests, confirming flight schedules, and wishing a safe trip. The findings on the practical use of English to communicate with foreign passengers are in line with some studies (Cahyani & Drajati, 2017; Cutting, 2012).

Second, an interview with Passenger Service Assistants (PSA) states the importance of engaging in small talk, particularly when assisting VIP (very important person) or CIP (commercially important person) passengers. This language function is meant for creating a welcoming environment for passengers of high status or those seeking personalized assistance. PSAs' ability to engage in small talk and provide simple tour guides about the airport is expected to improve the overall passenger experience.

Third, this study also uncovered the English language used by the gate agents at an international airport. Gate agents are responsible for conducting baggage sweeping at the departure gate. This task is conducted due to the increasing use of self-check-in services. The passengers using this service occasionally exceed the allowed baggage limits. The interviews revealed that gate agents often find themselves explaining baggage allowances and regulations to foreign passengers. This proactive approach to communication by gate agents contributes to the orderly boarding process and minimizes potential disruptions during pre-flight procedures.

Fourth, the findings also highlighted the language used by staff at the information desk. They rely on English language skills to perform a range of language functions, including those identified at the check-in counter, Passenger Service Assistant (PSA), and gate agent roles. Additionally, the staff is frequently asked about directions and helping passengers navigate the airport's complex layout, find amenities, and find departure gates.

Last but not least, the lost and found staff reported that they used English less frequently than other positions mentioned above. This is due to property irregularities; passengers lose or damage baggage, which rarely happens. They reported that sometimes, when this happens, they need English to inquire about passengers' basic information, including their names and addresses in Indonesia. Moreover, Lost and Found staff members need English to clearly describe the compensation procedures for damaged or lost baggage. This involves explaining the necessary documentation, timelines, and relevant policies.

## 2) *Pronunciation of the technical terms in aviation*

In Indonesia, local ground crews occasionally need to communicate with foreign airline crews. The participants suggest that being able to pronounce standard technical aviation terms is important to avoid miscommunication. Proficient pronunciation of these specialized terms is important to establish clarity and precision in communication with foreign airline crews. The respondent stated that the ability to articulate these technical terms not only facilitates clear communication but also contributes to the overall safety and efficiency of airport operations. The technical terms involve places at the airports, documents in flight, items and equipment used by ground crews, and general procedures for airport operation. The respondents suggest that English training materials should at least contain the practice of standard pronunciation for those terms.

According to the interview with the English teachers and faculty members, they share similar points of view. The English teachers and faculty members suggest joint efforts between English teachers and subject teachers in the preparation of instructional materials. The English teachers can receive invaluable assistance from the subject teachers about guidance and resources for these specialized aviation terms. On the other hand, the English teachers can help the students with the pronunciation aspects. Within the collaboration, the vocabulary can be taught in context.

Although less frequently used, some of the participants reported that they needed English to understand the manuals for equipment at work. Proficiency in English is essential, as many of these manuals are available in English. These manuals include equipment operation manuals, baggage handling manuals, and aircraft handling manuals. For operation manuals, especially at the airside operation, they use equipment such as baggage conveyors, tugs, push-back tractors, an airbridge, and a baggage cart. Manuals for these machines explain their operation, maintenance, and safety features. The respondent reports other manuals related to baggage handling. They contain information on procedures for baggage sorting, loading, and unloading.

However, the participants, especially the ground handling crew, state that while English proficiency is essential, it may vary depending on the airports and airlines. Some airports may provide testing to ensure that ground handling personnel meet the necessary language proficiency standards. Other airports and airlines may require a lower level of English proficiency. However, they claimed that anyone who applies for a ground handling position at an international airline is more likely to encounter a higher standard of English language requirements.

The English teachers and faculty members, on the other hand, feel that the English language curriculum (syllabus) does not cover the reading manuals. The faculty members claimed that most students, although they are senior high school graduates, have varied levels of English proficiency (mostly low). Due to the students' proficiency levels, the teachers state that it is better to focus on the very basic needs of the ground-handling students. The teachers remark that they should at least be able to do the routine task of handling foreign passengers. More importantly, they are at least able to pronounce the technical terms related to their job correctly.

## 4. Conclusion

The development of ESP learning materials for ground handling services students is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a profound understanding of their needs. The researchers hoped that the insights generated from this research would serve as a foundation for the creation of ESP materials that are pedagogically sound and responsive to the needs of the parties involved. This study is expected to be a catalyst for further research and development in the field of ESP materials, fostering ongoing improvements in the education and training of ground handling students within the aviation industry

### Acknowledgment

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to STTKD Yogyakarta for their invaluable support and cooperation throughout the course of this research study. Without their generous assistance and unwavering commitment to education and research, this study would not have been possible.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all the participants who willingly shared their time, insights, and expertise. Their active involvement and contributions have been instrumental in shaping the outcomes of this research. Their dedication to improving the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning materials for ground handling students has been truly commendable.

### Declarations

- Author contribution** : Herida Panji Olivia Azhar was responsible for the entire research project. He led the writing of the manuscript and the collaboration with the second author. Anita Nur Masyi'ah participated in the data collection and analysis. She helped type the manuscript. Both authors approved the final manuscript.
- Funding statement** : This research is funded by the The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Penelitian Dosen Pemula*) with the contract no. 042.6/LL5-INT/AL.04/2023).
- Conflict of interest** : Both authors declare that they have no competing interests.
- Ethics declaration** : We as authors acknowledge that this work has been written based on ethical research that conforms with the regulations of our university and that we have obtained permission from the relevant institute when collecting data.

We support *The Journal of Silence Studies in Education (JSSE)* in maintaining high standards of personal conduct, practicing honesty in all our professional practices and endeavors.

**Additional information**

No additional information is available for this paper.

### REFERENCES

- Adi, S., & Khotimah, K. (2018). Challenges of a non English education graduate in teaching ESP: A case study in State University of Surabaya.
- Ali, S., Al-Garni, & Hamed, A. (2019). The effect of using communicative language teaching activities on EFL students' speaking skills at the University of Jeddah. *English Language Teaching*, 12, 72–86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n6p72>
- Anthony, L. (2018). *Introducing English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.
- Association, I. A. T. (2021). *IATA Ground Operations Manual (IGOM)*. International Air Transport Association. <https://books.google.co.id/bsooks?id=4wBLzgEACAAJ>
- Cahyani, A. P., & Drajadi, N. A. (2017). English communication problems and needs from social engagement perspective as experienced by airport passenger-handlers. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:115503859>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (Third Edition)*. SAGE.
- Cunningham, U., & King, J. (2021). Information, education, and language policy in the linguistic landscape of an international airport in New Zealand. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350125391.ch-005>
- Cutting, J. (2012). English for airport ground staff. *English for Specific Purposes*, 31(1), 3–13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2011.06.002>
- Ellis, S., & Gerightly, T. (2008). *English for aviation for pilots and air traffic controllers*. Oxford University Press.

- Emery, H., & Roberts, A. (2010). English for Specific Purposes. Check your aviation English. Student's Book: For ICAO Compliance. Hueber Verlag GmbH. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=MMheSwAACAAJ>
- Fitria, T.N. (2022). Using authentic material and created material (teacher-made) for English Language Teaching (ELT): Benefits and limitations. *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education*, 3, 117–140. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32505/jades.v3i2.4674>
- Gerighty, T., & Davis, S. (2011). English for cabin crew. Cengage Learning.
- Gestanti, R., Nimasari, E., & Mufanti, R. (2019). ESP issue in Indonesian tertiary context: What students need in learning English. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, 3, 98–117. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2019.31.98117>
- Goodman, R. (Ed.). (2008). Aviation English. student's book / with Ruth Goodman (1. publ). Macmillan Education.
- Huong, D. (2020). Teachers' and students' perspectives on using authentic materials in teaching English at Hanoi University of Home Affairs. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)*, 10, 683–688. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.07.2020.p10375>
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). English for specific purposes: A learning-centred approach. Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/003368828701800207>
- ICAO. (2009.). Guidelines for aviation English training programmes. International Civil Aviation Organization.
- Iucu, R. B., & Marin, E. (2014). Authentic learning in adult education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 142, 410–415. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.702>
- Lansford, L., & Ellis, S. (2010). Express series English for cabin crew: A short, specialist English course. Oxford University Press.
- Leo, S. (2017). English for professional airline services. Gramedia Pustaka Utama. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=Jd88DwAAQBAJ>
- Liu, Y., & Wang, J. (2023). Strategies for reducing EFL learners' foreign language anxiety in online classes: Investigating teachers' teaching credentials and experience. *Heliyon*, 9(7), e17579. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e17579>
- Madya, S. (2002). Developing standard for EFL in Indonesia as part of the EFL teaching reform. *TEFLIN Journal*, 13(2), 142–151. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v13i2/142-151>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2018). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook. SAGE Publications. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=fjh2DwAAQBAJ>
- Muecklich, N., Sikora, I., Paraskevas, A., & Padhra, A. (2023). The role of human factors in aviation ground operation-related accidents/incidents: A human error analysis approach. 13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.treng.2023.100184>
- Murphy, R., & Klett, L. bei. (2019). English grammar in use: A self-study reference and practice book for intermediate learners of English: With answers and ebook. Cambridge University Press. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=Ih-4wAEACAAJ>
- Oreschko, B., Schultz, M., & Fricke, H. (2011, January). Skill analysis of ground handling staff and delay impacts for turnaround modeling. <https://doi.org/10.3233/978-1-60750-812-0-310>
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2010). Approaches and methods in language teaching (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Shawcross, P. (2011). Flightpath: Aviation English for pilots and ATCOs student's book with audio CDs (3) and DVD. Cambridge University Press. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=Yd4gFHYFtNgC>

- 
- Solomon, M., Askegaard, S., Hogg, M. K., & Bamossy, G. J. (2019). *Consumer behaviour; European perspectives*. Pearson Education.
- Ting, S.-H., Marzuki, E., Chuah, K.-M., Misieng, J., & Jerome, C. (2017). Employers' views on importance of English proficiency and communication skill for employability in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7, 77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i2.8132>
- Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2011). *Materials development in language teaching* (2nd ed). Cambridge University Press.
- Uemura, C. (2014). *General English for Aviation: Pilots, cabin crew, ground staff, and air traffic controller*. Cengage Learning. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=HOGNzgEACAAJ>
- Woodrow, L. (2018). *Introducing course design and English for specific purposes* (First edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group